

FIRSTwords

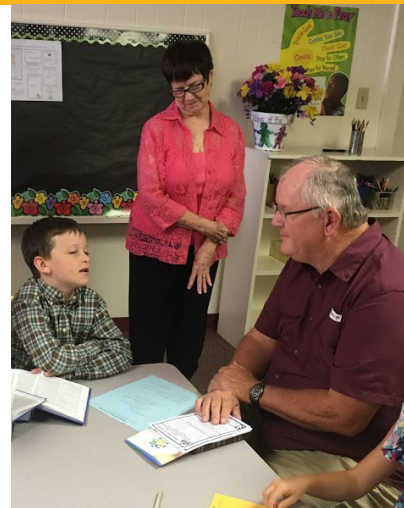
TO REACH PEOPLE FOR JESUS CHRIST & TOGETHER BECOME MORE LIKE HIM

GENERATIONS SUNDAY

Do you remember having to sit at the “kid’s table” at family gatherings? The place where the youngest generation of the family sat so the adults could carry on a real conversation and not worry about being covered in crumbs or a spilled drink. I remember sitting here and wanting to go to the real table where there was laughing, grown up status, and extra rolls. It is natural for there to be a generational divide. This is part of our culture at home and in our churches. One of our goals at FBC is to eliminate that divide so generations might be connected to one another. Over the past few years I have tried to move again, this time to grab a seat at the kid’s table. In the breaking of bread with children and teenagers, I have learned a lot. At camp when eating with our youth, I learned that lunch is more fun with airdrop turned on. With some preschoolers at a GLO class party, I learned that Christmas is the one day of the year that Jesus turns into Santa to tell if you’ve been naughty or nice (note: this is not the biblical view of Christmas as I understand it). At the FBC Family Thanksgiving Dinner, I learned that middle school boys can serve each other communion and they can be a part of a holy moment.

Psalms 79 says, “from generation to generation we will proclaim your praise.” In Psalm 100, “For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations.” The genealogies that are so easy to skim over with their impossible names, do more than give a family tree - they connect generation after generation to the steadfast love of God. Matthew’s gospel begins with a genealogy like this, showing that even Jesus is connected to other generations. In describing how God gives relief to those imprisoned and even facing death, Psalm 102 says, “Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord.” The worship and ministry in which we participate should give witness to each generation that God is still at work in the world. Sunday, January 21, we will again celebrate Generations Sunday with a church-wide breakfast and an intentionally intergenerational worship experience.

The worship and ministry of Jesus is not only for seasoned adults or for young people. It is for us all. The table we gather around to celebrate the Lord’s Supper is for each one of us, regardless of age. There is a place at the table for each of us. On Sunday, January 21, we will observe the Lord’s Supper in worship as a part of Generations Sunday. Generations will serve and be served by one another and we will remember that God’s faithfulness continues to all generations. I am excited to be a part of a church who is committed to each other and even to generations that are yet to come. Young and old, we will proclaim God’s praise. I hope to see you on the 21st for communion as all of us sit around the same table.



JANUARY 2018



FIRST BAPTIST
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words

FOR THE JOURNEY

DOORWAYS...

Some go through the annual ritual of making New Year's resolutions. Others use this occasion to at least consider making changes in their lives. We know the predictable resolutions: losing weight, a healthy diet, getting organized, or kicking a bad habit. Other goals include worrying less, letting go of things outside our control, and not sweating the small stuff.

The tradition of New Year's resolutions goes back to 153 BC and the Romans. They named the first month of the solar calendar after the god, Janus, the god of new beginnings and transitions. They saw Janus as the god of doors and entrances. They depicted Janus with two-faces, one looking back and the other looking forward.

As you think of the two-faces looking back and looking forward, which view describes you? Be honest. Some spend way too much time looking back. We can look back in wistful nostalgia remembering what was. We can look back in regret of what never will be or cannot be changed. Some focus on looking ahead, living in the future and missing the present. Others look ahead with anxiety, imagining the worst or paralyzed by the fear we're on our own.

So what can we do? Take the two faces at face value.... As you look back, say, "For all that has been - Thanks." Regardless of the pain of the past or the joy of the journey, you have been kept to this very moment. As you look to the future in faith, say, "For all that will be - Yes." You were created for a purpose. God will "complete the good work He began in you. (Philippians 1:6)

Resolutions look like a doorway. What open doorway is before you? What moment of transition? What new beginning is shining before you? Perhaps it is time to say "good-bye" to something in the past. The doorway says let go of who you think you should be and embrace

who God created you to be. Where is God calling you this New Year? Jesus "stands at the door knocking with new possibilities." He can give you the courage and resolve to walk through it.

We have more than just the secular custom of New Year's Day resolutions. January brings the celebration of Epiphany. Epipha-what? The word means "shining, a showing or revealing" that points to the star of Bethlehem which guided the Wise Men. Epiphany marks the visit of the Magi to see the Christ Child. They traveled 750 miles in the cold and dark across miles of wilderness and wasteland following a shining star. In their journey, they walked through a doorway and were never the same again. At the end of their journey...or was it the very beginning...they said, "Hello" to more than a New Year, but a new life.

Matthew tells us "they departed by another way." Once we take the risk and cost of the journey and worship Him, we cannot go back the same way. When we walk through the doorway to worship and surrender our gifts to Him, the future might not be safe, but we will be secure, no matter what the future holds.

Resolutions? I will walk through the doorway to worship Christ every morning with 10,000 reasons. I will trust His leading, even when night falls and the star disappears. I will serve Him. I will give to Him, believing He will provide everything I need. I will give Him every situation which seems hopeless. If we will walk through these doorways, we will be changed and "depart by another way" into the hope of a New Year.

Knock, knock, who's there?

INFLUENTIAL GRANDPARENTING

by CV Blake

I visited recently with a friend of mine who lost his grandfather during the holidays. Actually, he had been losing his grandfather for several years as he progressed through dementia. In the progression through this long goodbye to his grandfather, he began to ponder the legacy he had been given. He says, "They were in church every week and they made sure the rest of the family was too. My grandmother cooked lunch 'every' Sunday. So, I think you had to go to church to know when church ended and the meal began!" He said his grandmother taught adult Sunday school for forty years. They were, "always there, just so faithful and committed." He described how they went to all of his games—even when he wasn't playing. They were always there.

Do you have a story of how you were influenced by Christian grandparents that you would be willing to share? Please email it to me at cv.blake@fbcabilene.org

Think Generationally

What does it mean to be a "good grandparent?" Is there a standardized ideal or scale? Two scripture passages (there are actually many) that speak to generational thinking are "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." Deuteronomy 4:9 "He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born.... Psalm 78: 5-6

Larry Fowler says that we should watch 1, teach 2, think 4:

- 1.) Watch ourselves—Generation 1. (Deut. 4)
- 2.) Teach our children—Generation 2. ...and their children—Generation 3. (Deut. 4)
- 3.) ...even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children—Generation 4. (Ps. 78)

If this is true, we are to live our lives in front of our grandchildren as though our influence will extend at least 150 years. This is only possible if we remember that in the lives of children, a grandparent's influence is second only to their parents'. However, grandparents should always be aware of the opportunity we have to influence the spiritual lives of our grandchildren. They must know our stories of faith. This is our opportunity to think generationally.

Think Intentionally

Grandparents, what would we be willing to do to influence the next generations to know of our faith and to follow Christ? How would you be willing to invent your role as a disciple, a teacher, a song leader, a scripture memorizer, or a story teller? Can you imagine the stories your grandchildren will tell about you? What will they tell their children about what they saw in your life?

Shelly and I have a three-year-old granddaughter. It was not that long ago that her mother, our daughter, was a small child just like her. I think about the day in the not-so-distant future when my granddaughter will place her child in my arms.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3: 20-21.





**GRACE
BASED**
parenting conference

**GRANDPARENTING
FRIDAY FEB 9th
7 - 9p**

**PARENTING
SATURDAY FEB 10th
9a - 1p**

FREE CHILDCARE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ABILENE

For more information about the conference, visit the facebook page at:
<https://www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchAbileneConference/>

You may also register for the conference by clicking on the following link:
REGISTER FOR CONFERENCE

BIG A CHRISTMAS

by Teresa Ellis

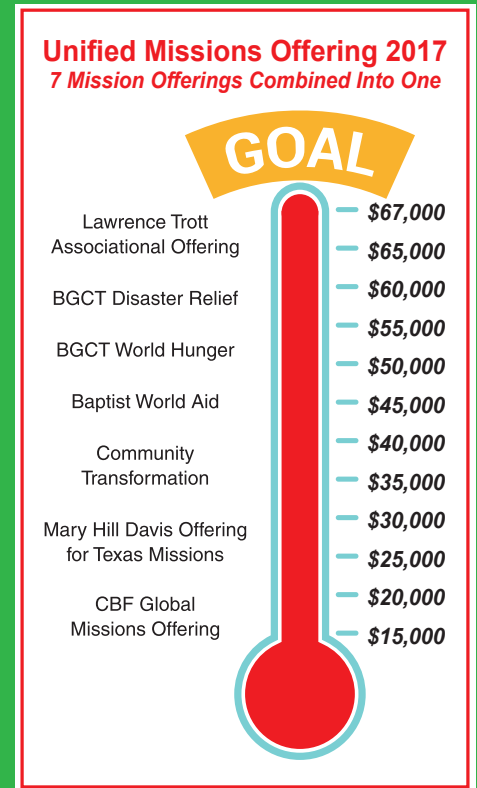
I love our church and the many opportunities we have to be the hands and feet and voice of Christ! One such opportunity that the Journey Class enjoys each year is the Big-A Christmas Party. Susan and Tom Martin begin early to find just the right keepsake boxes to place the gifts in for the fifth-grade girls we host each year. Using funds the class donated, Sandi Rainwater found small gifts to place inside the boxes. As a class, we wrapped the boxes and got everything ready for the party.

We began the Big-A party evening by sharing pizza. I ate with three girls from our Big-A class who came to Abilene at different times in their lives from a country in East Africa. Two arrived in Abilene when they were young, and the third girl arrived just a couple of years ago. They were bright, happy, boisterous girls with lots of questions about the evening and what we had planned for them.

Following dinner, several of us from the Journey Class gathered around tables with the girls and made Christmas ornaments. Sandi then read a Christmas story and Bob Ellis closed with a prayer for the girls that they would see in the baby Jesus how much God loves each of them. The evening concluded as we distributed the wrapped boxes to each girl and watched as they opened their presents with such excitement! One girl was going to save hers to open at home on Christmas, but as she heard the squeals, and saw all the wonderful things inside the other boxes, she just had to open hers too. When it came time to make the group picture, all the girls insisted that they get to hold the sacks holding their prized boxes, Christmas ornaments, and Big-A sweatshirts. As we were cleaning-up, the girls came unprompted to hug each of us before they left for the waiting bus to take them home. As they ran from the room, Sandi leaned over and said, "This is what Christmas is all about!" I responded, "Indeed! And I dare say that as much as I love my family Christmas gathering, there will be nothing that will quite compare!" Thanks be to God, for fifth-grade girls, for our church, and for the love of Christ who makes it all possible!

It's time to Celebrate our Unified Missions Offering!

Thank you to everyone who gave, and continues to give, to our Unified Missions Offering for 2017. We have blown past our \$67,000 goal and currently sit at \$91,894. Incredible!! Seven different ministries will receive more from FBC than they have in many years. The work of these ministries reaches our city, our state, and our ministry points all around our world. Because of your generosity, missionaries will receive the needed funds to continue ministry and outreach which has eternal consequences. To celebrate, we want you to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing to CBF Global Missions, Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions, Abilene Community Transformation, Baptist World Aid, Texas World Hunger, Texas Disaster Relief, and our Lawrence Trott Associational Offering. We are "holding the ropes" for these important ministries who change our community and world. We could not have done this without the generosity of our people here at FBC. Thank You!!



Did you know that by giving to FBC Abilene through our: Budget, Unified Missions Offering, and Faces and Places missions' campaign, you helped to be the presence of Christ in these areas for 2017?

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

Skopje Food Bank • GA's • City Light Community Ministries • Martinez Elementary Partnership • Hurricane Harvey Disaster Relief • Hardin-Simmons University • PrayerWorks • CBF Global Missions Offering (110 Missionaries) • City Light Thanksgiving Breakfast • FBC TV Ministry • FBC Single Moms Ministry • Abilene Baptist Association • Baptist World Alliance • Operation Christmas Child • God's Little Ones • Flour & Sugar • FBC Bereavement Ministry • McAllen New Beds • South Africa Network of Churches • McAllen Family Gardens • City Light Christmas Eve Dinner • Big A • Buckner Partnership • Southeast Asia – Mary & Hunter • Jeans for Homeless AIDS Students • Rockin' Moms • Living Water El Salvador • Internationals • CBF Texas • City Light Christmas Store • RA's • Templo Bautista • Laura Ellis – Bali • Cooperative Baptist Fellowship • Unified Missions Offering • Skopje, Macedonia • Jeff, Alicia & Ethan Lee • FBC Family Life Center • Upward Basketball • Ministry Phnom Pehn, Cambodia • David & Lauren Bass • City Light Personal Assistance • Healing Hearts Ministry • 2 FBC Missions Homes • Martinez School Supplies • City Light Mail Service • Abilene Baptist Social Ministries • Macedonia Milk Bank • Martinez Elementary Fall Festival • Abilene Habitat for Humanity House – Mulanda Family • Texas Baptist Mary Hill Davis Offering • City Light Church • Ladywell Baptist Church in Livingston, Scotland • David Pearson • FBC Trunk or Treat • Adults on Mission • Potter's Inn, Colorado • Duane & Sandy Hammack • Family Life Ministry in Kigali, Rwanda – Venantie Uwishyaka • FBC Ministry of Counseling • Baptist World Aid • Martinez Meet the Teacher • Texas Baptist Disaster Relief • FBC Good Cheer • McAllen Family Mission Trip • CBF Bill Bruster Scholarship • GLO Thanksgiving • City Light Laundry Ministry • Macedonia Mission Trip • City Light Community Meals • United Way of Abilene • Single Moms Ministry • Paws for People • Youth Mission Trip • Baptist Joint Committee • Brett Greenfield – Zambia Trip • RA & GA Macedonia Cows • Martinez Teacher Gifts • Big Hope Mentoring Program • Martinez emergency needs • Easter Egg Hunt • BOBS • FBC Friendship House • CBF 25 Anniversary Missions Endowment • Texas Baptist Mary Hill Davis Offering • CBF Arizona • CBF West • Big Country Baptist Assembly • Eunice Chambless Hospitality House • Baptist Joint Committee • Texas Baptist World Hunger • City Light Shower Ministry • Lawrence Trott Associational Offering • Abilene Community Transformation • Christian Service Center • FBC Disaster Relief • Baptist University of the Americas • Mission to East Africa – Olan & Lynn Burrow • Nazareth Evangelical College • Coalition to Combat Human Trafficking in Texas • Willow Meadows Baptist Church Harvey Support • Abilene Education Foundation • New Roof for Nueva Esperanza Baptist Church • FBC Missionary Gifts • Rwanda Transportation for Venantie Uwishyaka • Baptist Temple Harvey Support • McAllen House Paint & Supplies • Texas Baptist Men



NEW HOPE FOR NUEVA ESPERANZA BAPTIST CHURCH

How does it feel to give hope to someone or some organization, or hear of a need and then have the ability and willingness to resource and meet that need with a group of volunteers? FBC Abilene had that opportunity to give hope by roofing Nueva Esperanza Bautista Church in Anson, Texas. Asked by our Baptist Association to help, 25 (16 from FBC and 9 from NEBC) people tore off the really old shingles, hammered in and took out old nails, repaired holes and rotten wood in the deck, laid the plastic underlayment, replaced all of the drip edge, installed 64 squares of three tab charcoal roofing shingles, and cleaned up the entire church grounds. It was a totally new roof that no longer leaked, the raccoon which lived in the attic no longer had a home, and the members at this church could start the process of worshipping back in their sanctuary because it was safe to enter. Thank you for being a church who cares and steps up to help this body of believers in our community. This church was about to lose hope, but willing people from FBC changed the future and direction of this important ministry. Your gifts to our Unified Missions Offering (Community Transformation) helped purchase most of the supplies needed, and 16 willing people from FBC gave their valuable time and weekend to accomplish this task. A special thank you goes to Kyle Berry and Robert Yearian for lending their expertise, humor, and “no problem...we can do it” attitude. FBC Abilene made a difference in the life of this church and NEBC is making a difference in Anson, Texas.



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.

CITY LIGHT CHRISTMAS STORE

Thank you to everyone who donated toward our City Light Christmas Store! Through your generous donations, we were able to provide Christmas to 47 families with 118 children! A special thank you to Martinez Elementary who helped donate funds, toys, and volunteers to our store. We also had volunteers like Janet Mendenhall, Barbara Bacon, Beth Young, Toni Burger, Betty Coffey, Judy Partee, Linda Piazza, Sheila Morse, Maggie Hernandez, and Benita Reed who helped set up the store, greet shoppers, assist with shopping, and load the cars with gifts. We appreciate all of our volunteers and could not have done it without them. Our City Light Christmas Store was a success because of the congregation here at First Baptist. We could not have done it without your prayers, donations, and toys. Thank you all and we look forward to what next year brings!



FBC ABILENE ACTING IN LOVE - SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIPS FOR 2018

God can use you to change the world by being willing to serve Him and go wherever He calls. FBC Abilene is working to answer the call to "Go" in the following areas for 2018. Begin praying about how God can use you on a short-term mission project. Continue to watch for more details as these projects are beginning to organize and additional opportunities of service. Contact the missions' office or John Moore at john.moore@fbcabilene.org if you have interest or questions. We are doing our best to minimize the cost of each trip. Your gifts to the church budget help to lower the cost for each trip as our church budget covers many costs which are not passed on to each participant. Early sign up will reduce the travel cost and your total cost of the mission project. You can sign up now through the missions' office. Space is limited for each project. The very first step is to reserve your place on each team and then move to securing a valid passport (if needed)...so if you have questions, please contact the missions' office.

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.

PANCAKE SUPPER

The annual RA/GA/Kids on a Mission Pancake Supper will be held Saturday, January 27, 2018 in the dining room. Pancakes, bacon, coffee, and orange juice will be served from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. This event allows our children to raise money to use for various mission projects.

Tickets will go on sale beginning January 10 and may be purchased from one of the children in RA's, GA's, or Kids on a Mission. They may also be purchased in the church office or at the door the day of the pancake supper. The cost is \$5 per person, children 4 and under eat free. All monies received this year, will go towards purchasing chicken coops and chickens in Southeast Asia.

This is an event that our children look forward to each year. Serving others during the supper is a wonderful hands on activity and is a great way for our children to put into action what they have been learning in their mission classes.

Please join us for a wonderful night of fellowship and some really delicious pancakes and bacon!





First Baptist Church will be hosting the
Singing Men of West Texas
on Thursday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.
All are invited to attend this free concert.

FBC Foundation Grant Request Forms Are Available

Forms are available in the office.
Deadline to return the form is noon,
Friday, February 9.

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

January 1, 17 years
Maura dela Cruz
Assoc. Director of CLCM

January 1, 3 years
Heather Henderson
Librarian

January 1, 10 years
John Moore
Pastor for Missions

January 7, 22 years
Beverly Warren
Pianist

January 1, 14 years
Malisa Baldivia
GLO Teacher

January 12, 1 year
Airicka Garcia
GLO Teacher

January 1, 6 years
Lynn Martin
City Light Food Service

January 14, 14 years
Melissa Mundy
*Ministry Assistant
to the Pastor for Adults*

EVENT CALENDAR:

JANUARY

- 10 Meal/Activities Resume
Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting
- 14 Personnel Committee Meeting
Parent Summit
- 16 LLL
Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 17 Church Conference
- 18 Singing Men of W. TX Concert
Healing Hearts Meeting
- 21 Generations Sunday
Deacon Ordination Service
- 25 Time of Prayer
- 27 RA/GA Pancake Supper
- 28 Budget Discussion

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Thanks be to God. We continue to grow in understanding the fruit and promises of the Blessed Life. The Blessed Life unlocks the gifts of generous living. We trusted that God would provide for our mission and ministry needs this past year. Through God's faithfulness and your extreme generosity, we gave to God \$3,374,194 on a required ministry budget of \$3,289,742. Your gifts allowed us to exceed our 2017 required budget goal by \$84,452. As the Apostle Paul says, "We give thanks for your earnestness and love, and that you also excel in the grace of giving." We hope you realize the difference you have made in helping us fulfill our mission of "Reaching people for Jesus Christ, and together becoming more like Him."



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