

FIRSTwords

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

UPDATE FOR THE CONGREGATION

Patient anticipation. This is our hope for First Baptist as this new year begins: that we will anticipate what lies ahead with patience. As a church in transition, we know things are changing and will change even more. Changes call for patience as we work within shifting circumstances and fresh challenges, but changes also create the opportunity to anticipate new things God wants to accomplish within our congregation.

Following the retirement of Dr. Christopher, we are fortunate to have the leadership of a very capable ministry staff who have taken on extra duties, and we have heard from various gifted preachers over recent months. While that variety has been good this fall, we now look forward to the consistency of a single voice of weekly proclamation as Dr. Matt Cook begins service as our interim pastor on January 9. He will be able to wisely guide us through this new year of transition in which we are patiently listening to discern the leadership of the Spirit of God and preparing for the coming of a new senior pastor one day. Because Dr. Cook is serving as both the consultant to the Pastor Search Committee and as our Interim Pastor, there is a significant financial savings to our congregation by using him in both roles.

In the new year, we are also anticipating two more Congregational Conversations during which the Pastor Search Committee will be listening to what you as a church say about who we are and where we are going. The **Second Congregational Conversation will be on January 23** and will address the FOCUS of our church. The **Third Congregational Conversation will be on February 27** and will consider our church's TRAJECTORY. We will follow the same timeframe for these sessions as for our first conversation. Please put both dates on your calendar: **January 23 and February 27.**



Here are the details for our next Congregational Conversation:

WHAT: Second Congregational Conversation for all FBC Youth and Adults

WHERE: Family Life Center Gym

WHEN: January 23, 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 [simply click here](#), or contact Debra Clemmer (325) 675-8116 or debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org, or the sign-up sheet in your Sunday school class.

For everyone who came to the first congregational conversation in November, thank you for participating AND we look forward to hearing from you again, because the second conversation will be asking for your feedback on different issues. If you were not able to attend the First Congregational Conversation, we especially want to hear from you in these other two conversations, as it's very important to have your input.

In the Second Congregational Conversation on January 23, we will be looking at two major pieces of information: internal data about the state of our church and external data about the community in which we minister. To say it another way, this second conversation involves a mirror view, whereby we take a look at ourselves, and a window view through which we examine the context around us. The search committee will be presenting data about these two perspectives and asking what you think about this information and what it means for our church now and in the future.

Leading up to our Second Congregational Conversation in January, we are also renewing the call to Prayer@First. We will have prayer emphases in our worship services and on Wednesday evening at 6 p.m., and we ask that all Bible study classes and small groups pray for our church in transition. We encourage you to pray for a good attendance at the Second Conversation and for our church as we grow in our spiritual discernment.

The Pastor Search Committee is grateful for your patience as we continue our work. We have spent many hours analyzing and distilling what you as a church said about our core values during the First Congregational Conversation last November. At our January 23 session, we will report back to the church the results about those core values. The committee is also carefully planning for the Second Congregational Conversation and we hope you will be present to share your insights about where God is leading our church.

Looking forward with patient anticipation to what lies ahead,

Your Pastor Search Committee

Hello from the FBC Youth Ministry!

We have had a great fall semester within our ministry and I am very thankful for our students. I know we have all enjoyed our celebration of Christmas and the students were especially grateful for a break from school.

As we look forward into the New Year, I hope you are encouraged and engaged with what we have happening on the Youth Floor and in our church! Make sure to check out the important youth ministry dates listed in the graphic below.

Above all, we are always aiming to follow Jesus with the way we choose to live. This new year is another great reminder of the Lord's love for all of us. Let's let our stories be a reflection of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives!

Your friend,

Austen



DEACON ORDINATION X2

Last year, we were deep into COVID-19 and simply did not feel safe in asking folks to come together and have the ordination service for our newly elected deacons knowing that part of what makes that service so special is the laying on of hands and the intimacy of the moment. As the year progressed, we simply did not ever reschedule that service. Now a year has passed and it is time to ordain the new deacons who will start their three-year term of service, as well as ordain those from last year. So, we are going to have two ordination services in order to give ample time to each person who is being ordained to fully participate in the service. The first service will be held on Sunday, January 9 at 6:00 p.m., then the second service will be the following week, Sunday, January 16 at 6:00 p.m. Both services will be held in the sanctuary. A list of who will be ordained each night will be sent next week in the weekly reminders. Please be in prayer for each of these deacons as they prepare to share how God is at work in their lives.

Wednesday Night Spiritual Formation Class STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Led by Dr. Larry McGraw

God's people were in transition. Long-time leadership had come to an end; a look to future leadership was on the horizon. How would God's people answer the call to ministry in a new chapter of their lives?

"FBC Church people," this sounds like us, correct? Yet what is being described took place over 3,000 years ago in the Old Testament. The tenure of Moses had come to an end; the days of Joshua were beginning.

Years earlier, God's people were dwelling in Egypt. Now, they were in transition to a new land. What would God want them to do in different circumstances, in a different time, and with different leadership? The one thing which would not be different...the presence of the Lord.

In 2022, during our Wednesday night gatherings of fellowship meals and events, we will also be doing a study on the book of Joshua from 6:00-6:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary. You are invited to take part in the mid-week gatherings and come to study...what the Bible says from the book of Joshua.



CITY LIGHT CHRISTMAS STORE THANK YOU

Thank you to all of you who gave gifts, money, and time to the City Light Christmas Store this year!
You enabled us to help over 147 kids!

We worked with Martinez, GLO, City Light, and our community and contacted families to come shop at the store. The gifts you gave and the ones purchased with monies given were set up at City Light for shopping. The parent, grandparent, or guardian came to shop and were able to choose what they would like for each child at a small price.

The best part happens while they shop and as we help load presents into their car! We get to visit with them about their children and about what is going on in their lives. Most of them carry a heavy burden! The store helps to relieve a portion of that burden for them. It also builds a relationship for the future with this ministry and helps them see that God is real, loves them, and will supply their needs.

2021 has been another rough year which we will not soon forget and has changed many lives for a long time to come, and some forever. This store and so many ministries at First Baptist Church and City Light Community Ministries have been that light and relief which so many have needed during this time and will continue to be that light moving forward!

Once again, thank you for your love for God's people and your actions!



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

MISSION BITE #246: CONTINUALLY AMAZED

Caesar makes about \$55 a month. He is a guard who watches over someone else's property and stuff. Six days a week, for about 12 hours a day he sits and guards. His salary supports his wife and two kids. One day recently, he again asked me for a small loan.

In trying to help him become more sustainable we examined his budget. \$30 a month on rent. \$25 a month on food. He started to list other expenses and I stopped him and said you've already reached your total income. He looked down and shrugged.

We talked about him returning to his rural village to try to survive there. He didn't want to go yet.

In early June, COVID-19 began hitting Uganda hard. Everything is again in lockdown. How will Caesar and his family survive on his salary? Now that Uganda is in lockdown they can't return to his village.

I am continually amazed at how people survive on so little. And amazed that when Caesar is off on a Sunday he will be in church.

Jade Acker, CBF field personnel serving in Kampala, Uganda



At the beginning of 2021, I partnered with another local NGO to start a community garden in a vulnerable community. We completed the construction and had the grand opening with the British Ambassador on June 15th.

The opening was a huge success!

The partnership includes two local individuals that we trained to take the everyday operation and distribution of the fruits and vegetables to the families in need. We continue to grow more products for those in need. We also received a small grant from another local NGO. This partnership will help us achieve sustainability over the next few years. We are excited about the future opportunities to impact the community.

Jeff Lee, CBF field personnel serving in Skopje, Macedonia



FRIENDSHIP HOUSE THANKS YOU!

Thank you for the support of our first Christmas Parade for the community! We had a great time and visited with neighbors and new friends. The cookies you donated hit the spot! We feel blessed to have the great support of First Baptist Church!

If you would like to know more about the Friendship House and this ministry, contact John at 325-675-8112.

FBC FOUNDATION *Grant Request Forms Are Available*

Forms are available in the office.
Deadline to return the form is noon,
Friday, February 4.

JANUARY FLOUR AND 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 or to the church offices. Funds are preferred as they allow the leadership to purchase items as needed throughout the coming months.



STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

January 1, 21 years
Maura dela Cruz
Associate Director of CLCM

January 1, 14 years
John Moore
Pastor for Missions

January 1, 10 years
Lynn Martin
City Light Food Service

January 7, 26 years
Beverly Warren
Pianist

January 14, 18 years
Melissa Mundy
Ministry Assistant to the Pastors
for Young Adults & Students

January 16, 3 years
Rachelle Phillips
GLO Teacher

January 19, 3 years
Whitney Patterson
GLO Teacher

January 28, 3 years
Kayleen Mills
Director of Operations/Chef Trainer

January

- 2-6 College Winter Retreat/Glorieta
- 3 Church Offices Closed
- 5 Wednesday Night Meal/Activities begin
- 9 Deacon Ordination Service
- 16 Deacon Ordination Service
- 17 Church Offices Closed
- 23 2nd Congregational Conversation
- 30 Exalt

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

December 2021

Budget	December	Year-to-Date
Required	\$437,153	\$3,479,313
Given	\$315,266	\$2,998,858

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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