

# FIRST *words*

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



## DISCIPLE NOW

*by Austen Winfrey*

Disciple Now 2020 was roughly two weeks ago, and the weekend went really well! The students had a wonderful time learning from Scripture, fellowshiping with one another, worshipping, eating a lot, and stepping out of their normal routines to rest. I would like to take the time to show my appreciation for everyone who volunteered their time to help with Disciple Now weekend. We had great host homes and Bible study leaders. Holly Winfrey gave us great insight from Scripture and called us into action with her sermons. Katlynn Nichols and Asa Welker led us in times of meaningful worship. We had deacon families provide great lunches for the students. Patti & Mike Greenfield and Debra & Steve Clemmer cooked a beautiful fajita dinner for us. We had many volunteers help out everywhere throughout the weekend.

I am very thankful to serve with a church family who seriously supports our students. The theme for DNOW was "Surrender." We all have to make the decision to surrender our authority in this life so we can be obedient and follow the way of Jesus our Lord. I am grateful this theme was lived out by those of you who served in many ways this DNOW weekend. Thank you First Baptist Abilene for giving me so much support in my first Disciple Now here. I am humbled with the grace you have shown me. Holly and I are very happy to be here in Abilene!



MARCH 2020



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# words

## FOR THE JOURNEY

Last week, I had the privilege of sharing in the service for Cleve Whitener who tragically died in a plane crash on his way to hunt at his ranch. He had so much for which to live and to give. This tragedy reminds us we do not have forever to make our lives count and leave a legacy. Cleve found power in journaling each day in his walk with Christ. I had the holy privilege of reading his journal which was one of the few items recovered from the devastating crash site. He wrote: *"Lord forgive my sin. I have not acted nobly. I pray dear Jesus, have mercy on me for I am weak and lowly. How can I be cleansed and made whole? Only by the blood of Jesus."*

Cleve's words express the heart of Ash Wednesday and the forty days of Lent as we journey to the cross. *"Lord forgive my sin. How can I be cleansed and made whole? Dear Jesus have mercy on me."* The forty days of Lent call us to surrender and remember Christ's sacrifice for our sin - only the forgiveness of Christ can make us whole. Lent is not only a time to give something up as we learn to depend on God's grace to satisfy our souls. It is a time to consider what will I give myself to....

Did you ever see or read Thornton Wilder's play, *"Our Town"*? Emily dies during the birth of her second child. She is given the chance to revisit the happiest day of her life. Emily chooses her twelfth birthday. Yet, from the grave her invisible visit results in major disappointment. Emily becomes troubled that the living can't understand how miraculous it is to be alive and to rejoice in the ordinary things. As she prepares to depart, Emily laments: *"Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it - every, every precious minute?"*

As we have grieved over Cleve Whitener's tragic death in a plane crash, we don't know how much time we have. Psalm 90 reminds us life is fragile and we are finite. He writes: *"Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures...for they quickly pass and we fly away."* *"Teach us to number our days, that we might gain a heart of wisdom."* Even musicals proclaim the brevity of our days with the lyrics: *"Sunrise, sunset,*

*quickly go the days."* When will we become wise enough to see each day is a gift and to rejoice in the ordinary. The Apostle Paul added his call to wisdom: *"Do not live as the foolish, but as the wise making the most of every opportunity."*

The book of James says, *"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."* James speaks these words of wisdom not to worry us, but to warn us about careless and self-centered living.

The forty-day Season of Lent calls us to confession in remembering the haunting words of Ash Wednesday, *"From dust you came and dust you shall you return."* It calls us to remember life is brief - we don't have forever. So, what will we do during these 40 days to *"make the most of every opportunity"*?

Back on January 9, Cleve penned in his journal: *"How do you finish well?"* Such a question will not go away. Listen to his answer: *"Only by the grace of God. I have strived for a purpose-driven life. I will be a good steward. Fill me with your Spirit that I may walk with you and be a blessing to others. Show me where I am to serve."* His testimony captures the essence of the Lenten journey which will lead us to the Spring of Easter - remember, Lent means *"Spring."*

Brave Journey in these 40 Days.

Phil



Once again, First Baptist along with  
Connecting Caring Communities will be sponsoring

# The Cobb Park EASTER EGG HUNT ON SATURDAY, APRIL 4 AT 10 A.M.

***We are going to fill over 4,000 eggs for the hunt!***

We need your donations of plastic eggs and individually wrapped candy. Please no chocolate...it melts! There will be several donation crates around the church until March 22 for you to leave your donation or you are welcome to bring them to the church office.

If you would prefer to give a monetary donation, please mark it for "Easter Eggs" and place it in the offering plate, mail it to the church, or bring it by the church office.

We will then purchase the eggs and candy in bulk.

If you have a group who would like to help fill eggs or have any questions, contact Melinda in the church office at 325-675-8112.



# Elder Grace:

## GROWING OLDER GRACEFULLY

Have you thought about how you create your own path to Eldering?

Are you aware of the potential Eldering presents?

Growing older (eldering) is a journey of grace and challenge. Elder Grace is a workshop/seminar for elder adults and those who plan to be. How does God remain in control of the experience of growing older? We will be learning how meaning, memory, mortality, mystery, and maturity support our staying purposeful in the fourth quarter years. Care givers (current and potential) are also welcome.

A workshop/seminar led by  
Gene Hendrix, Ed.D.

Date: Monday, March 23

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
(including lunch)

Location: Third floor Gathering Room

Cost: \$5.00 (for meal and materials)

Contact [Jeannie.wesley@fbcabilene.org](mailto:Jeannie.wesley@fbcabilene.org)  
or 325-675-8107 for reservations.

Sponsored by the following ministries:

Maturing Adults Ministry  
*C.V. Blake*

Ministry of Spiritual Development  
*Mike Greenfield*

Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment  
*Steve Queen*

# PRESCHOOL NEEDS YOUR HELP!

We are needing extra help in Extended Session starting in April and through the summer months. Extended Session is for our babies—Pre-K and takes place during the Worship service.

If you are already on our list and can volunteer on some extra Sundays or if you would like to be a volunteer, please contact Candy Rains at 675-8192 or Jennifer Miller at 675-8105.



Are you interested in learning more about First Baptist Abilene? **DISCOVER First Baptist** is a great place to get your questions answered. This relaxed, but fast-paced class is offered one Sunday morning a month from 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. in Room 300.

You will discover our Baptist distinctives, core beliefs, Abilene uniqueness, how we are structured, how to connect to programs and ministries, whom to call for help, and much more.

**THE NEXT CLASS IS SUNDAY, MARCH 29.**



## STABILITY & HOPE

City Light Community Ministries is launching a  
CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### **Program Purpose:**

To work with neighbors in crisis, helping them find stability and hope in a loving Christian environment.

Paired with a caring volunteer, neighbors experiencing crisis will find:

- stability through relief of their immediate needs
- hope for a more secure future by working on goals to improve self-sufficiency.

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!**

***Have you been looking for a way to get more involved in the community?***

*We are training lay case managers to walk alongside our neighbors during the week as a support and advocate and to share hope with those experiencing crisis.*

***Informational Meeting: Sunday, March 22, Room 112 after the morning service***

*For more information: Contact Melinda at 325-675-8112*



# ACTING IN *Love*

## SHORT-TERM *Mission Trips* FOR 2020

**MAY 15-23**

*Skopje, Macedonia*

To support, encourage, and walk alongside CBF missionaries Alicia & Jeff Lee and their work in Skopje. This trip is for college students and young adults before summer begins! The tentative price will range from \$2,400 - \$2,800 depending on cost of airfare. Opportunities to help reduce the cost for students is available. Space is limited!

**JUNE 10-13**

*Baptist University of the Americas...Painting and Fun!  
San Antonio*

We will be partnering with BUA in helping with some housing which is in need of paint! If you are a skilled painter...great! If not...it may be time to learn a new skill! We will paint during the day and visit some fun San Antonio sites in the evening. Contact the Missions' Office if you are interested in this opportunity.

**JULY 15-25**

*5<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Mission Trip (New Date)  
McAllen, Texas*

This will be the 5th Family Mission Trip along the Texas border! Once again, 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 will begin work on a new Buckner home. We will need some experienced help on the home build and some willing hands. There will be many other opportunities during this time for families to help at the Hope Center in McAllen such as leading a Vacation Bible School during the week. The date you arrive and leave is up to you. Would you be willing to turn your family vacation, or part of your vacation, into furthering the cause of Buckner in this important area of our state? The price range for this mission trip will be the cost of transportation, lodging, and meals for each family. Call the Missions' Office for more information.

**SPRING 2021**

*Phuket, Thailand*

Our ministry trip to support CBF friends Mary and Hunter was a great success in 2019 and we will be returning in the fall of 2020 to continue to support their ministry. Building relationships, encouraging new developments, teaching English classes, and cultural exchange will help to guide our efforts in Thailand. Plans are in the beginning stages and people are needed, so contact the Missions' Office if you feel God leading you to serve in this ministry effort.

# ROCKIN' Moms

Rockin' Moms has been around for almost 17 years and meets every second Tuesday of the month except during Spring break at the City Light building.

For questions or volunteer opportunities, please contact  
Maura dela Cruz  
(325-673-6686 or [maura.delacruz@fbcabilene.org](mailto:maura.delacruz@fbcabilene.org)).

January 27, 2020

I joined Rockin' Moms in 2007. Lady Olga came by my apartment complex looking for another lady and she saw me just sitting outside and said, "Hi." She asked me what my plans were for that night and I said, "nothing" and she said "Come on with us. Lock your door, grab your purse and come."

I've been enjoying going ever since. I love the prayers and meeting all the ladies and the great food and the speakers who come to tell us about different things going on in our community and also the craft we do and how they turn out plus the gift we win, too.

It has been a nice experience for me to attend and get to talk about our problems and get prayers said for them which is a nice thing. The ladies who work and help our night go smoothly are really nice and we're blessed we have them there.

I feel blessed every time I go.

Yours truly,

**Mrs. Vicky Sorenson**  
Rockin' Moms participant



## YEAR-END NUMBERS

Once again, the faithfulness of God's people to return to Him a tithe of what He has provided for Kingdom work through the church has been amazing. The gifts to the budget exceeded the 2109 budget by \$27,539. The staff was very conservative in the spending of those funds and actually underspent the budget by \$118,448. So, at the February meeting of the finance committee, they were able to use some of those funds to take care of a project that was outside of the normal budget and one that needed help. The current phone system is 14 years old and many of the components are outdated and difficult, if not impossible to find. Also, with the expansion of the Hope Center, we needed a new phone system which would be able to handle all of those needs and the year-end funds enabled us to do just that. The committee also set aside almost \$60,000 for defer maintenance on the capstone which is a part of almost every building here at the church. The capstone is beginning to show signs of wear and needs repair/replacement in some places and simple sealing in others. These funds will help start that project.

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

**March 15, 25 years**

**Phil Christopher**

*Senior Pastor*

**March 19, 2 years**

**Matthew Broyles**

*Pastor for Emerging Adults*

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

*February 2020*

<b>Budget</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Required	\$ 246,870	\$ 586,439
Given	\$ 218,999	\$ 632,859

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

## EVENT CALENDAR:

### MARCH

- 1 Personnel Committee
- 5 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 7 Lion's Club Spaghetti Supper
- 8 Recreation Board Meeting
- 9-13 Spring Break
- 11 No Wednesday Night Activities  
Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting
- 15 Foundation Board Meeting  
Missions' Committee
- 17 Finance Committee  
Deacons' Meeting
- 19 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 23 Elder Grace Workshop



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