



# FIRST WORDS

## LOVE IS IN THE AIR!

Love was truly in the air at City Light this Valentine’s Day. We had such a sweet time celebrating our neighbors and reminding them just how deeply they are loved—not just by us, but by God.

Every neighbor who walks through our doors is someone’s child, someone’s sister or brother, someone’s parent or grandparent. They are worthy of dignity, kindness, and feeling appreciated. Our prayer is that through small acts of love, they experience a glimpse of the unconditional love God has for them.

A special thank you to the Hardin-Simmons nursing students who helped us stuff treat bags and share the joy. We couldn’t do it without friends like you.



Dear FBC Family,

We are entering a new season of firsts for the Miller family in Abilene. Our first Ash Wednesday service. That enters our first season of Lent culminating in Maundy Thursday. Then our first Easter. Just typing this out makes me long for resurrection!

Many of you have made commitments to fast from something in Lent. Maybe it is chocolate or your favorite drink. Maybe some of you have decided to fast from caffeine or like me have done a modified technology fast (can't always escape the tech in today's world!). I have one other challenge for us as we journey these last few weeks to Easter. This admittedly is inspired by an article I read from the new Pope. Let's give up harsh words toward one another, including on the internet!

Paul after all said, "But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." (Colossians 3:8-10) Imagine a world where you build people up rather than tear them down with your words. Imagine keeping that harsh thought about someone to yourself and rather respond with your most generous assumption.

This does not mean to not hold someone accountable. Rather, the goal is to infuse the world with kindness, clarity, truth, and love in our speech. What if we were known for how positively and lovingly we spoke to one another, even or especially, in hard conversations? I'm praying for you all, journeying with you to the cross, and am proud to be your pastor.

Grace and Peace,

**RAY P. MILLER, DMIN**  
Pastor, FBC Abilene, Tx





## FBC WOMEN'S MINISTRY

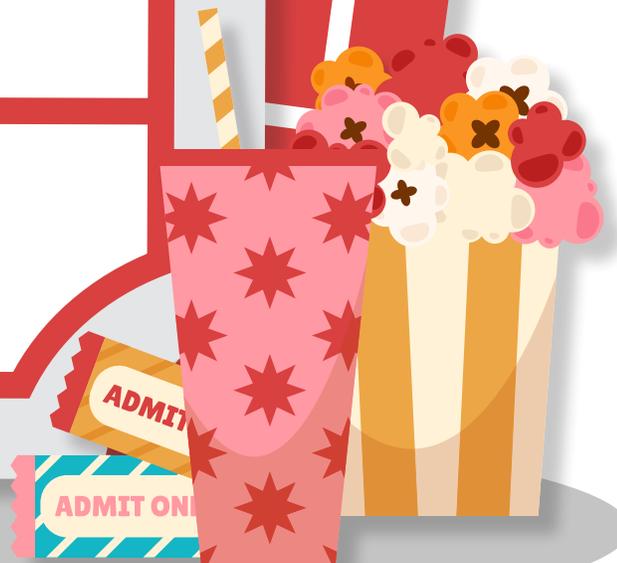
Let's Get Together on Friday, March 27 for a **GIRLS ONLY: Movie Night**. We will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the high school room to watch *Parent Trap*. We will have movie snacks and drinks available.

# — *girls only* — MOVIE NIGHT

This is a wonderful opportunity for our little or young girls to meet some of our not as young girls and hopefully spend time building new relationships. Even if you're not that interested in the movie, come and be with us on this night when we will literally have all ages joining together.

This will be a wonderful way to join together as the family of Christ, so we hope you will make plans to attend and not only be blessed, but be a blessing to someone!

03.27.2026



## Counselor Spotlight:

### TIFFANY FINK



When even one member of a family system seeks therapeutic assistance in processing their big emotions, or traumatic experiences, the entire family system benefits, which in turn adds to the overall betterment of mental health in our communities. A few years ago, I returned to graduate school to earn an MMFT degree. Although I continue to teach U. S. History remotely for a university in Texas, I made a major career change in 2025. I joined the therapists at MOCE as a contracted Marriage and Family Therapist – Associate working with couples, families, and individuals of all ages and stations in life beginning in August 2025.

Three factors contributed to my decision to pursue a place of my own alongside the therapists and staff at MOCE. The first is history. My own history with FBC Abilene and MOCE started long before employment there. My husband, Rob, and I married at FBC, and I joined the church after accepting a history teaching job at HSU. A few years later, Rob and I wrote *Love Unbounded: The Influence of First Baptist Church on Abilene, Texas* (Statehouse Press, 2009), which was our labor of love to educate Abilene about the local missions of the church, including MOCE. My children grew up at FBC and fell in love with worship through their musicianship. My beloved in-laws continue to serve there. Some of my best friends are there. Currently, I help lead GriefShare at FBC Abilene and serve as an active deacon.

The second reason is that I believe in the purpose of MOCE. When I was 18 years old and a first-semester college student, my mother died of cancer. With no extra money nor any health insurance, my access to individual counseling was nonexistent. Yet, for a few months, I attended the free-to-the-public grief group for teens at the WARM Place in Fort Worth. I know personally what it means to have free access to therapy in a time of great crisis. MOCE exists to remove barriers to mental health care for couples, families, and individuals. I am grateful to be a part of that mission because it matters to me and to my own story.

Lastly, and long story short, Jennifer Smothermon is the main reason I am a therapist practicing at MOCE. In addition to meeting with me weekly for supervision throughout my internship and now as part of my Associate hours, Jennifer provides to me a plethora of resources for the practice of clinical therapy as an MFT. I cannot overstate the depth and breadth of knowledge this therapist-supervisor holds in her brain about the fields of Marriage and Family Therapy and Play Therapy. She has taught me so much.

A little-known fact about MOCE is that a lot of very short yet beautiful, encouraging conversations happen in the kitchen area. At any given time of day, people warm their lunches, pop in to refill a cup of coffee, take their turn in the restrooms between clients, or zip through to snag something off of the printer. We usually have only 7-10 minutes between sessions, but there are human connections happening between therapists and staff in that little kitchen on a daily basis. I find that space to be nearly sacred as a beginning therapist. Each therapist at MOCE, as well as every staff member and many board members, have offered me encouragement, patted me on the back, or given me a nugget of wisdom to apply to my work while passing one another in that kitchen space.

In closing, I recommend that each of us stretch daily, practice breathing slowly and deeply, and operate from a place of understanding that love is the most powerful force for good in all the world. And one more thing: everyone needs therapy.

### **Recommended reading:**

bell hooks, *All About Love* (1999)

Rachel Held Evans & Matthew Paul Turner, *What is God Like?* (2021)

Mary Oliver, *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver* (2017)

Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2005)

Anne Lamott, *Help, Thanks, Wow: Three Essential Prayers* (2012)

From the Book of Lamentations, Chapter 3 (any version)

## **ICE ICE BABY**

With heartfelt gratitude, we want to say thank you to the incredible servants who showed up early to shovel, scrape, and move mountains of ice so we could safely host our community weekend.

To the Patterson family, Zach Crowe, Phil Brown, and the Men of Nehemiah—thank you for going the extra mile (and every slippery step in between!) to clear the parking lot and protect our congregation. Because of you, what could have been a slippery situation turned into a safe and welcoming Sunday.

You didn't just break the ice—you melted our hearts. "Snow" doubt about it, we couldn't have done it without you!



# Serve

AT FBC ABILENE

## 2026 MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

### Habitat for Humanity

We are partnering with Habitat for Humanity to help build a home for a special family in our community. Watch for the spring dates that will be published soon.

For more information, contact John Moore ([john.moore@fbcabilene.org](mailto:john.moore@fbcabilene.org)).



### Mexico City Mission Trip June 1-8 (new date)

First Baptist Church, Abilene is heading to Mexico City in June. We need you to join us in a medical/children's ministry opportunity. No experience needed, just a willing heart to serve. This cross-cultural ministry experience will cost between \$800 - \$1000. Help lowering the cost is available upon request. Watch for an information meeting coming soon.



## Houses for Healing Scurry House

First Baptist Church sponsors the Scurry House through Houses for Healing. This ministry supports individuals and families with temporary housing for those receiving medical treatment here in Abilene. We are looking for volunteers to join the H4H team.

Contact Ashley Adams  
(Ashley.adams@fbcabilene.org)  
for more information.



## City Light Community Ministries

We are looking for volunteers to help in the kitchen/meal service and with front desk neighbor services. If you desire to work and express love to our Abilene neighbors, then come serve with us at CLCM. For more information contact Beth Young (beth.young@fbcabilene.org).



## CarePacks For Kids

Did you know that FBC provides weekend lunches for kids going to Martinez Elementary struggling with food insecurity? Those CarePacks provide the sustenance needed to make it through the weekend until the next school meal. Help us continue this ministry by assembling CarePacks and delivering CarePacks to Martinez Elementary School. For more information,

contact Ashley Adams  
(ashley.adams@fbcabilene.org).



# The Sisters' Table TEA PARTY

At this week's Sisters' Table, we gathered to celebrate what it means to be Daughters of the King. It was a sweet and meaningful morning filled with truth, fellowship, and joy.

Todd Wilson graciously joined us and serenaded the ladies, setting such a beautiful tone for the day. Ann Mayhall shared a heartfelt lesson reminding us that we are deeply loved—true princesses, cherished daughters of the King.

After our time of fellowship, we enjoyed a lovely tea party together. A special thank you to Michelle Elliott with Cookies by Me for generously donating four dozen delicious thumbprint cookies for our ladies. What a blessing!

We closed our time with conversation and sweet voices singing "Jesus Loves Me." It was a beautiful reminder that we belong to Him.



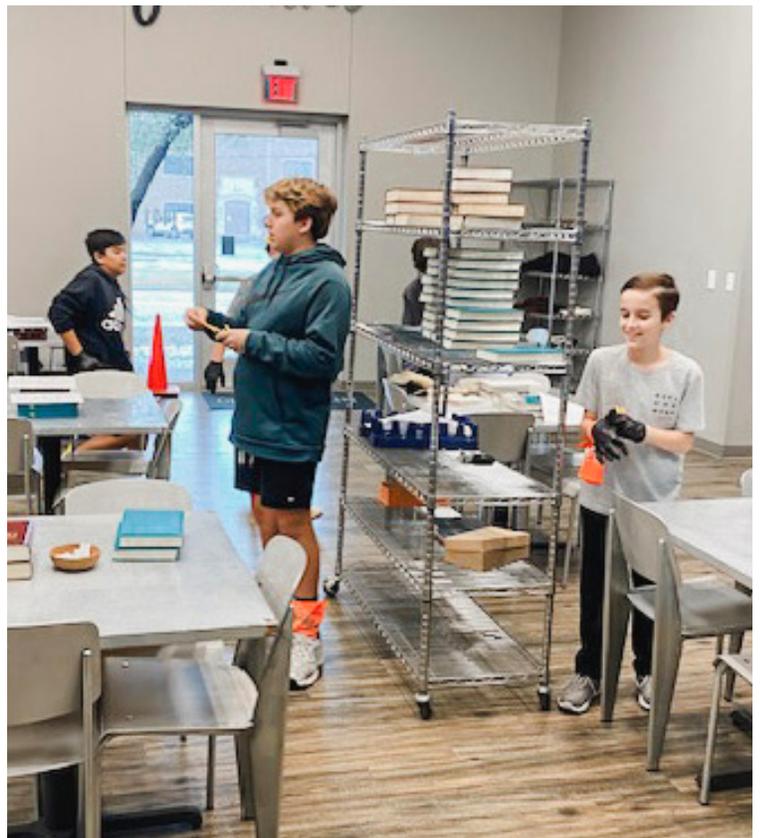
# Sweet Notes & SERVANT HEARTS

Freshman and sophomore girls, thank you for the sweet notes and delicious cookies you made for the City Light staff. Your kindness truly blessed us and made us feel so appreciated.

To all the middle school boys, thank you for cleaning the tables in our dining room for your D-Now service project. Your hard work and willingness to serve did not go unnoticed.

We are so grateful for each of you!

With appreciation,  
City Light Staff



# DISCIPLE NOW 2026

Disciple Now 2026 was a blast! This year, our students looked at the theme of “Rest,” and they discussed the practice of Sabbath as a source of mental and physical rest and as a renewal for our souls. Bryce Hollingsworth led our youth in our worship sessions through his own pilgrimage of following Christ. Jonny Hughes and his band encouraged our students to sing and give praise to God. I would encourage you, if you see them around the church, to ask our students how the weekend went. You might see them in one of their “Rest” t-shirts. Ask them what they learned during the weekend. Like every year, you may hear wild stories about game-time activities like building survival shelters in the parking lot or bowling with coconuts. But hopefully, you will also hear the students speak of renewal and rest for their souls.



Thank you to everyone who helped make this weekend possible! With your dedication to our students and church, this weekend hopefully served as a time of rest and renewal for our students, as well as a time of high energy and chaotic fun. Our appreciation and gratitude go out to:

Bob Bein	Tiffany Fink	Rocky McAdams	Shona Preston
Audrey Brody	Mike Greenfield	Jeff Messer	Ron Rainwater
Kelsey Brown	Dina Griffin	Kelley Messer	Sandi Rainwater
Jerry Clark	Tim Griffin	John Moore	Susie Vandever
Kathryn Clark	Callie Harris	Adrienne Morgan	Trayton Weeden
Debra Clemmer	Clara Harris	Sean Morgan	
Steve Clemmer	Jerry Hendrix	Kristen Patterson	
Rob Fink	Amy McAdams	Matt Preston	

Thank you to all our deacons who brought food and drinks to our Parent/Student Breakfast on Sunday morning. The meal was loved by all who attended. I appreciate your generosity to our church!

Thank you to anyone whose name may be missing from this list or to those who helped from the sidelines. Thank you to those who donated scholarship opportunities to some of our students. I am grateful for your presence in our ministry and in the lives of our students. Thank you for your willingness to be the Body of Christ in all that you do.

**And...mark your calendars for next year! Disciple Now 2027: February 12-14.**



***"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."***  
– Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)



**HUNTER BROWN**  
Pastor for Youth



## God's Little Ones DAY★CARE

### **TEACHER OF THE MONTH**

Our Teacher of the Month is Savana McBride. She is a dedicated educator who truly loves her job and is passionate about supporting each child's growth and development. Her patience, creativity, and commitment make a positive difference in our classrooms every day. We are so grateful to have her as part of the GLO family!

### **GLO EVENTS**

We had wonderful parent involvement this month with many creative Valentine boxes—thank you to all who participated! Our Valentine Card Exchange took place in the classrooms on February 13 and was a fun and festive celebration for everyone.

The Abilene Public Library visited GLO on February 17 for a special story time with our children. We always enjoy partnering with our community to enrich our children's learning experiences.

We are also thankful for our volunteers from First Baptist, who host chapel for us every Wednesday. We appreciate their continued support and dedication to our children.



# CHANGE...GOOD OR BAD?

BY BETH YOUNG

*Director, City Light Community Ministries*

Change isn't always easy, but sometimes it's necessary.

Over the past month, City Light has been experiencing a season of change. If you've driven by, you've seen it happening right in front of our building—new concrete being poured, rock being added, and improvements taking shape. These updates were much needed due to drainage issues, and we are grateful for the progress being made.

A special thank you to Tom Martin for heading up this project, and to Eric Couvion and John Moore for their hard work and leadership throughout the process. Your dedication has made a big difference.

But, the changes haven't just been outside.

Inside, our staff has shown incredible flexibility. We've adjusted how we run the front office, how we distribute mail, how we prepare and package meals, and even how we serve—delivering meals out the east door instead of gathering in the dining room. It hasn't always been simple, but our team has adapted with grace.

We're also thankful for our neighbors, who have shown patience and understanding through every adjustment. Not a word of complaint, just cooperation and kindness.

We are hopeful these changes will improve our drainage situation and beautify the front of our building, making City Light an even more welcoming place for all who enter.

Sometimes change stretches us. Sometimes it refines us. And sometimes, it reminds us that growth often comes through transition.

Thank You, Lord, for the changes and for walking with us through them.



# Palm Sunday Choir

**SAVE THE DATE:**

Rehearsal: Wednesday, March 25-7:00pm

Sing: Sunday, March 29  
10:30am Worship Service

---

*Come be a part of the Choir!*

---

*Join us as we welcome Jesus and begin  
Holy Week with faith and gratitude!*



# MARCH

- 1** Next Steps Lunch  
Personnel Committee Meeting
- 8** Foundation Board Meeting
- 9-13** Spring Break
- 11** NO Wednesday Meal/Activities  
Buildings & Grounds  
Committee Meeting
- 15** Missions Committee Meeting
- 17** CLCM Board Meeting  
Finance Committee Meeting  
Deacons' Meeting
- 19** Men's Brown Bag Lunch
- 22** Lord's Supper
- 23** MOCE Board Meeting
- 24** GLO Board Meeting
- 27** Women's Ministry Movie Night

## MARCH 30 - APRIL 3 HOLY WEEK

- 30** Lunch @ Highland,  
Ray Miller speaking
- 31** Lunch @ FBC,  
Benji Van Fleet speaking
- 4/1** Lunch @ FCPC,  
Shane Hughes speaking
- 4/2** Lunch @ St. Paul,  
Cliff Stewart speaking



## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH • ABILENE

### STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

March 4, 2 years

**CYNTHIA MIXON**

*Music Ministry Assistant*

March 6, 1 year

**SAVANA MCBRIDE**

*GLO Teacher*

March 26, 1 year

**SUSAN DRAPER**

*MOCE Receptionist*

### STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

February 2026

<b>Budget</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Required	\$264,100	\$526,200
Given	\$251,091	\$477,512

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



FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH ♦ ABILENE

1333 North 3rd, Abilene, TX 79601  
fbc@fbcabilene.org | 325-673-5031

[www.fbcabilene.org](http://www.fbcabilene.org)