

FIRSTwords

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

THE SIX-YEAR HISTORY OF THE RE-VISIONING PLAN – *Community Transformation*

*City Light Re-Visioning Plan Vote *May 13, 2018 after the morning worship service.
(*Please note the date change)*

City Light Community Ministries became a reality in April 1997 through the ministry of David Leyerle and a church committed to serving everybody in our city. A newly remodeled facility in June of 2001 allowed FBC to bring Good News to anybody who entered our doors. Seventeen years later, the church is prayerfully seeking the leadership of our Heavenly Father to re-vision our philosophy of ministry, address our aging building and equipment, and develop new strategies for ministry which moves from enabling to transformation. The original long-term strategic plan of City Light, which dates back to 1997, called for the ministry to one day include and adopt the objectives which are a part of the Re-visioning Plan and Five Pillars. The Re-visioning Plan is really not something new, but was always a part of the original vision and strategy developed by David Leyerle, our first Missions Pastor.

CLCM WILL FOCUS ON FIVE PILLARS OF FOCUS:

- 1 DINING WITH DIGNITY**– To offer hospitality to a stranger as if they were family
- 2 COMMUNITY**– To do life together as family for all who enter our doors
- 3 LEADERSHIP TRAINING & JOB PLACEMENT**– To provide life changes for families through training and opportunity
- 4 CASE MANAGEMENT & PAYEE MANAGEMENT**– To break family cycles of poverty and homelessness together
- 5 EDUCATION/LITERACY/COLLABORATION**– Working together to change poverty's effect on families in our community.

Over six years ago, conversations began with the Missions Committee and City Light leaders led by Ken Lyle, Sr. about the ministry model of City Light. Dr. Lyle put in countless hours bringing together our current practice and emerging methodology of becoming less toxic and dependency creating. This dream was included from the very start in our “Reflection and Direction” discernment process and was a major way that we as a church “Act In Love.” Our deacons were updated and made suggestions to the plan in May 2016 and these changes were shown and talked about in our



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

I have lived in Abilene longer than anywhere else. I love this place and people. I enjoy looking at the history of our city and church. Here are a few historical markers. In January 1881, the Texas Pacific Railway tracks reached mile marker 407, the site that would become Abilene. Today the exact spot is Everman Park in downtown. In March 1881, Abilene was founded, and an auction was held to sell lots. In two days, 178 lots were sold to people who invested in the future of this prairie stop on the T&P railway which was just Mesquite trees and cactus.

On December 17, 1881, twelve people met in a house on Cedar Street and organized First Baptist. The church planter, O. C. Pope said as he rode out of town on horseback, "I wonder if anything will ever come of this?" I hope Dr. Pope has a view from heaven of our church today and what God has done from the tiny seed he planted on that rainy day. The miracles God can do if we will trust in His plan.

Here is another important date for our church and Abilene. In April 1997, City Light Community Ministries opened its doors after purchasing and renovating an abandoned bank building. This mission emerged from the vision and the call of Jesus to care for the "least of these."

Some had concerns about how the budget could fund the added cost of City Light. Yet, God has provided. The ministry has thrived in helping with electric bills, rent, or bus passes to get someone to a job interview. We will serve 36,000 meals this year. When I was at City Light on Wednesday, it was like church. Our brothers and sisters at City Light feel connected to us and have lessons to teach us about gratitude, perseverance, humility, and trust.

On May 13, we have the opportunity to take a giant step in community transformation with the *Re-visioning Plan*. We will not just help with emergencies or crises. We will empower people to move out of poverty through job training and personal case management. They will discover a new dignity in the expanded dining facility and take on the responsibilities of serving.

We believe with the new north entrance, the church campus will be safer. The plan will even help downtown businesses in providing a place for people to not just hang out, but to find direction and discover life skills for their lives.

The *Re-visioning Plan* for City Light will NOT take funds away from other ministries in the budget. Our Missions Endowment spins off over \$100,000 a year that can be used. We have already been in conversations with several foundations that expressed excitement in our plan. As this innovative ministry becomes a reality, we believe others will want to join us. I am in the process of having conversations with community leaders who already see the potential of our plan for downtown.

Funding this ministry will not be a financial burden on our children. I understand you want the best for your children and their future. Think...they will have the blessing and not a burden of impacting lives for the Kingdom - what a gift we will give them. As God has blessed us with abundant resources, God will continue to provide. I am grateful my daughter grew up in a church who was not inwardly focused or driven by the fear of not having enough. I give thanks our church taught Natalie to see what the church is called to be and do. This plan will teach our children that the church is about serving. They will see the Bible stories they hear in Sunday school put into action.

On May 13, I pray we will establish another important date in the history of our church. I wonder what will be said of us fifty years from now. Like those first pioneers in 1881, who bought lots in a town that didn't exist, I invite you to invest in this plan and trust "God is able to do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine." As those pioneers purchased lots to build Abilene, churches, and schools, let us build the Kingdom and transform our community as we "seek the welfare of the city." Remember, "To whom much is given, much is expected."

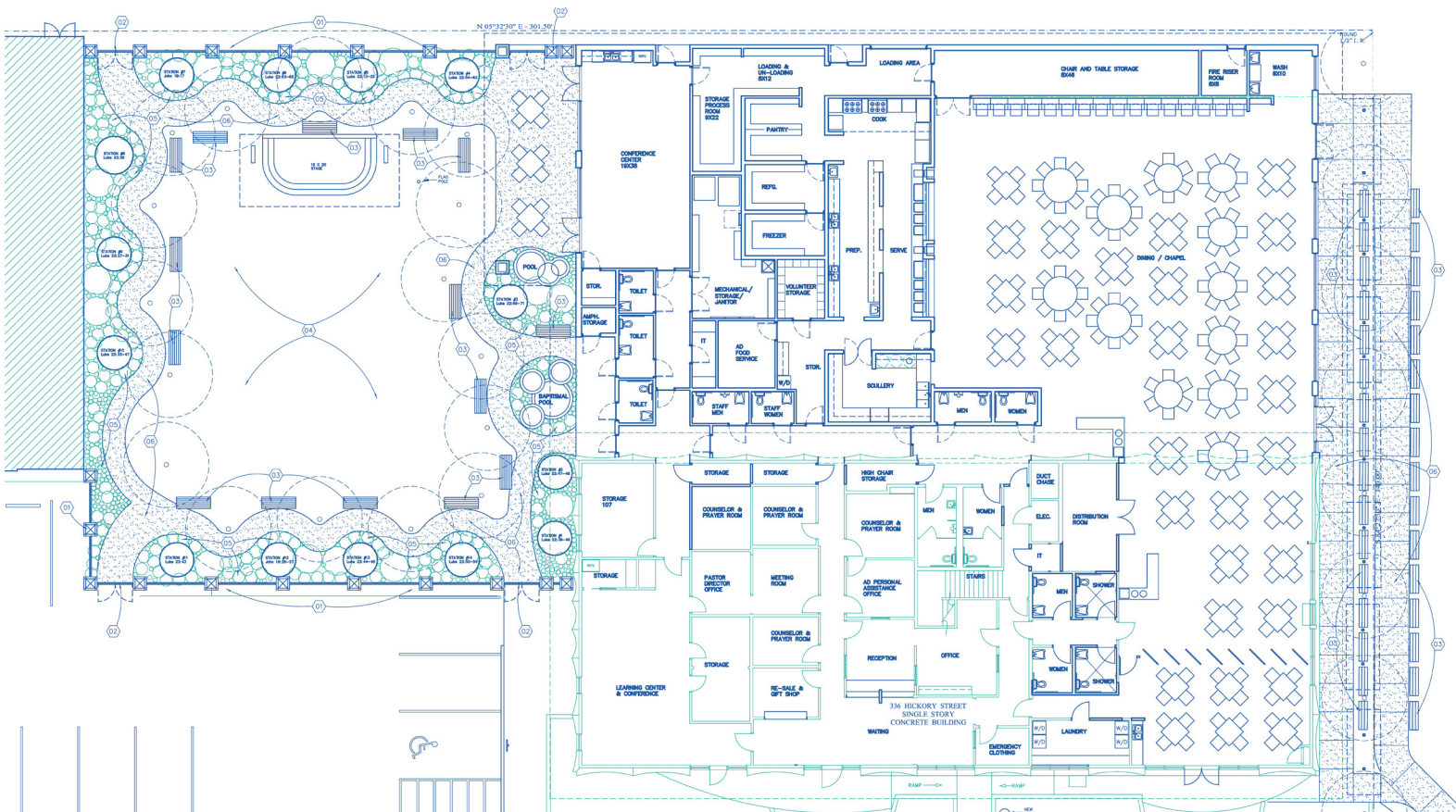
Pioneers, once again...
Phil

THE SIX-YEAR HISTORY OF THE RE-VISIONING PLAN - *Community Transformation (Continued from Page 1)*

City Light open house. City Light leadership, which included Karen Dansby, Diane Leggett, Wayne Roy, Susan Pigeon, Dr. Bob Ellis, Will Rogers, Maura dela Cruz, Lynn Martin, John Moore, and Dr. Phil Christopher, invested long hours into studying how we use our building and how it will be used in the future. An update for the re-visioning plan from the study group was again taken to the deacon body over a year ago. Suggestions were made for modifications by the deacons, which were made. After years of studying the need to move City Light from dependency to self-sufficiency, the church formally elected the study group as the Special Focus Committee on December 3, 2017. The Committee consists of Karen Dansby, Diane Leggett, Wayne Roy, Susan Pigeon, Hillary Moore, Dr. Bob Ellis, Will Rogers, Maura dela Cruz, Lynn Martin, John Moore, and Dr. Phil Christopher. This Focus Committee was to recommend to the Missions Committee, after intense study, how to move forward in development and implementation. An information brochure was designed for the church to explain the Re-Visioning Plan and made available to all members. The plan was taken to the deacon body in March and was discussed again at the April meeting. *All along, the process the desire for this Re-vision committee has been to plan, rework, listen, and communicate the vision, which has led us to allowing for an extra time of discussion. This Sunday, May 6, at 5 p.m. in the dining room, our congregation will have another opportunity to discuss this important mission of the church. This will be a special called church conference.

On Sunday May 13, the Missions Committee (Ken Lyle, Jr., Prudy Tyler, Ruth Anna Driggers, Barbara Darnall, Marci Cole, Dave Irwin, Louise Gray, Barry Moak, Jean Goodnight, Will Rogers, Jecilly Varghese, Martha Brown, Diane Leggett, and John Moore), and the Special Focus Committee will bring the following recommendation: ***To initiate a capital campaign to begin in the fall of 2018 called, "Seeking the Welfare of the City" and to raise \$2.8 million for transforming the ministry of City Light to empower people and transform downtown.*** Please join us in prayer for this important ballot vote without discussion on May 13 after the morning worship service. A "yes" vote does not mean construction begins. It gives us the opportunity to initiate a capital campaign to raise the necessary funds for funding the Re-visioning Plan. Depending on the funding, any changes will be brought back to the church.

This plan has been presented to various Sunday school classes, deacon body, town hall meetings, and proclaimed in worship two different Sundays. Please contact the missions' office (325-675-8112) if you have further questions.



ACTING IN love

FBC Unified Missions Offering 2018

“Bearing Witness to Jesus Christ”

Seven Mission Offerings Combined into One

Goal: \$80,000 – Year to date: \$7,195

Please continue to pray about how you can be involved in reaching our FBC Abilene Unified Missions Offering goal of \$80,000. These offerings bring together seven different mission offerings, which literally reach around the world.

What is the Unified Missions Offering?

The Unified Missions Offering provides members of First Baptist Church a way to impact the world with the message of Christ through consistent missional giving. You can give through the Unified Missions Offering envelopes, placing your offering in the offering plate, or bringing it by the church office.

How will your dollars grow God's kingdom?

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions Offering - 50%

Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions - 15%

Community Transformation - 12%

Baptist World Aid - 9%

BGCT World Hunger - 9%

BGCT Disaster Relief - 3%

Lawrence Trott Offering for Associational Missions - 2%

The envelopes will be available to pick up in the Welcome Center starting Sunday, May 13. The Missions Committee will also be bringing envelopes by each Sunday school class. We have available envelopes numbered from 1 - 400 as well as 100 blank envelopes for you to write down how much you would like to give. Your gifts to the Unified Missions Offering are literally impacting people around the world for Christ, so thank you for being a church who consistently gives toward this important offering.



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

Name: _____

2018 Unified Missions Offering Goal: \$80,000

\$400

Please pray about how you can be involved in reaching our FBC Unified Missions offering goal of \$80,000. These offerings bring together seven different mission offerings which literally reach around the world:

- ♦ Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions Offering
- ♦ Texas Baptist—Mary Hill Davis Offering
- ♦ Abilene Community Transformation
- ♦ Baptist World Aid
- ♦ Texas Baptist World Hunger Offering
- ♦ Texas Baptist Disaster Relief
- ♦ Lawrence Trott Offering for Associational Missions

We are encouraging families to choose an envelope with an amount to give toward Unified Missions. Please bring the envelope to the Church Finance Office or place in the offering plate.

BALI EXPERIENCES

by Laura Ellis

For the last seven months, I was in Bali partnering with CBF field personnel, Jonathan and Tina Bailey, to write about spirituality and the arts, which are two concepts that are intertwined through every aspect of daily Balinese life. Beyond the local community, I spent a lot of time with two other groups of people: a group of international students who came to Bali from all walks of life to learn about the rich, artistic culture and a group of inmates in Kerobokan prison who I met with for a rehabilitative art program.

From January to March of this year a group of locals, international students, and expatriates met daily to rehearse a music project which explored Balinese cosmology and portrayed the link between our material world and the divine. It is a story that honestly portrays struggle, hope, and God in the midst of each. The music had several points of chaos, which often occurred in places of conflict in the story. But sometimes, there seemed to be chaos simply for the sake of chaos. Eventually the chaotic noise faded away until all that was left was a quiet melody that I didn't notice in the midst of the disorder. I realized this melody was not new to me, but rather familiar because it was there all along. But it took the chaos for me to recognize it.

There were 45 performers involved in this project. Together we represented 18 different nationalities and various ethnicities, languages, religious backgrounds, and beliefs. With so many diverse people in one space, when we gathered it was often nothing short of chaos. But as we sat together to eat and talk about things we agreed on and things we didn't agree on, I always saw how beautiful our diverse chaos was.

A few weeks ago while visiting the prison, one man was painting messy lines and colors onto a canvas. When I saw this technique, I wasn't surprised as this particular man often created abstract and structural pieces. However, in the middle of this chaos was a picture of multiethnic hands clasping one another in a circle. He told me the title was Love. In the midst of a place of misfortunes and mistakes, I saw so much hope and earnest attempts of reform. The men often talk about what they want to do once they leave prison. They have normal dreams like getting a job and starting a family, but sometimes they talk about their big dreams of peace and hope that one day we can all clasp arms with people who are different from us even in the midst of the chaos of the world.

In Bali I learned that beauty and truth often hide in chaos waiting for someone to hear, see, and seek it. I've recently arrived back to the States, and I'm most struck by how orderly things are here. And as frustrating as it often was in Bali for events to begin hours after they are meant to, I wonder what beautiful interruptions we are missing by organizing the chaos. I'm reminded of the ministry of Jesus who stopped to notice the woman who touched His cloak through the chaos in the crowd. We believe in a Messiah who pauses to address the arms that reach out from the chaos of daily life. May we also notice the arms that reach toward us and clasp them with compassion.

I am so grateful to First Baptist Church, the church I grew up in, for teaching me what it means to love God and to love people. I believe that God is doing beautiful and chaotic things in Bali, and I thank each of you for being a part of it.

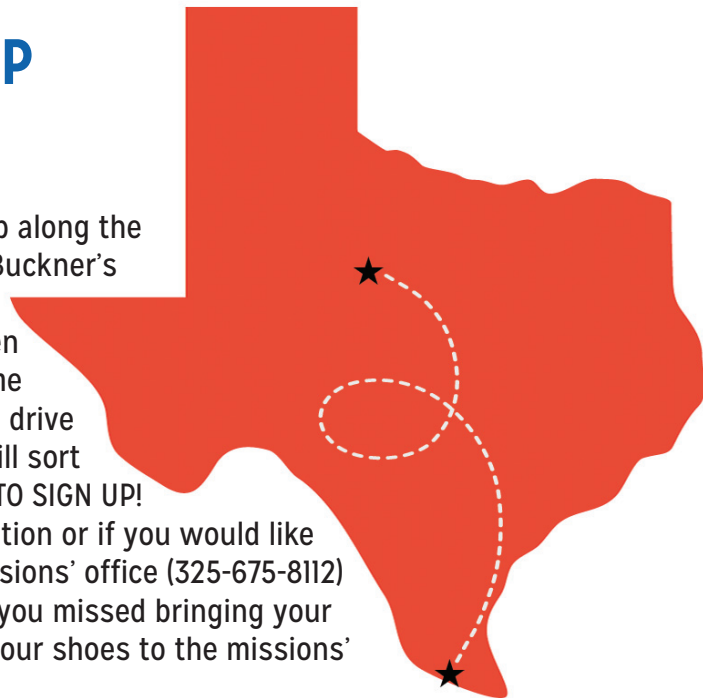


MCALLEN FAMILY MISSION TRIP

JULY 15 - 21 & 22 - 28

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 two teams traveling to McAllen with the opportunity to build a house and work in the Family Home Center. The shoes you donated during our Shoes for Orphan Souls drive will go to the Family Hope Center where one of the two teams will sort and deliver shoes to children along the border. NOW IS THE TIME TO SIGN UP!

The cost is \$25 plus lodging and transportation. For more information or if you would like to sign up, please contact Rebecca Hunt or John Moore in the missions' office (325-675-8112) or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org or john.moore@fbcabilene.org. If you missed bringing your shoes during the worship service on April 29, you can still bring your shoes to the missions' office through the end of June!



SENIOR ADULT *Spring/Summer* DAY TRIPS 2018

Monday, May 21:

Midland Rockhounds Baseball,
Cost \$12 (Ticket), Meals Dutch Treat.
Sign up by May 16.

Monday, June 18: Waco, TX - Magnolia Market, Dr. Pepper Museum, TX Sports Hall of Fame, TX Ranger Museum (may choose which locations to visit), Cost is Dutch Treat (two meals and admission) \$6-8 to each museum. Sign up by June 13.

Call Jeannie Wesley (675-8107) to sign up.

EMERGING

by Matthew Broyles

“What is an emerging adult anyway?” This is often the response I get when I tell people I’m a pastor to emerging adults. In fact, many in our own church have asked that question, and it’s a good one. My response is typically, “By First Baptist’s definition emerging adults are people ages 18-29, but hopefully we are all emerging in some way.” This typically gets a little chuckle and the conversation ends or moves to the next topic, but today, I want to continue the conversation.

Emerging adults, the age group, are a diverse group of people. Some are students in college, college-aged students who are working, people in their first careers, some single, and some married. Emerging adults are people who are breaking forth into new territory: new friends, new relationships, new challenges, new responsibilities, and new opportunities. The goal for our group is to explore new ways of experiencing the way of Christ as they encounter these new phases in life.

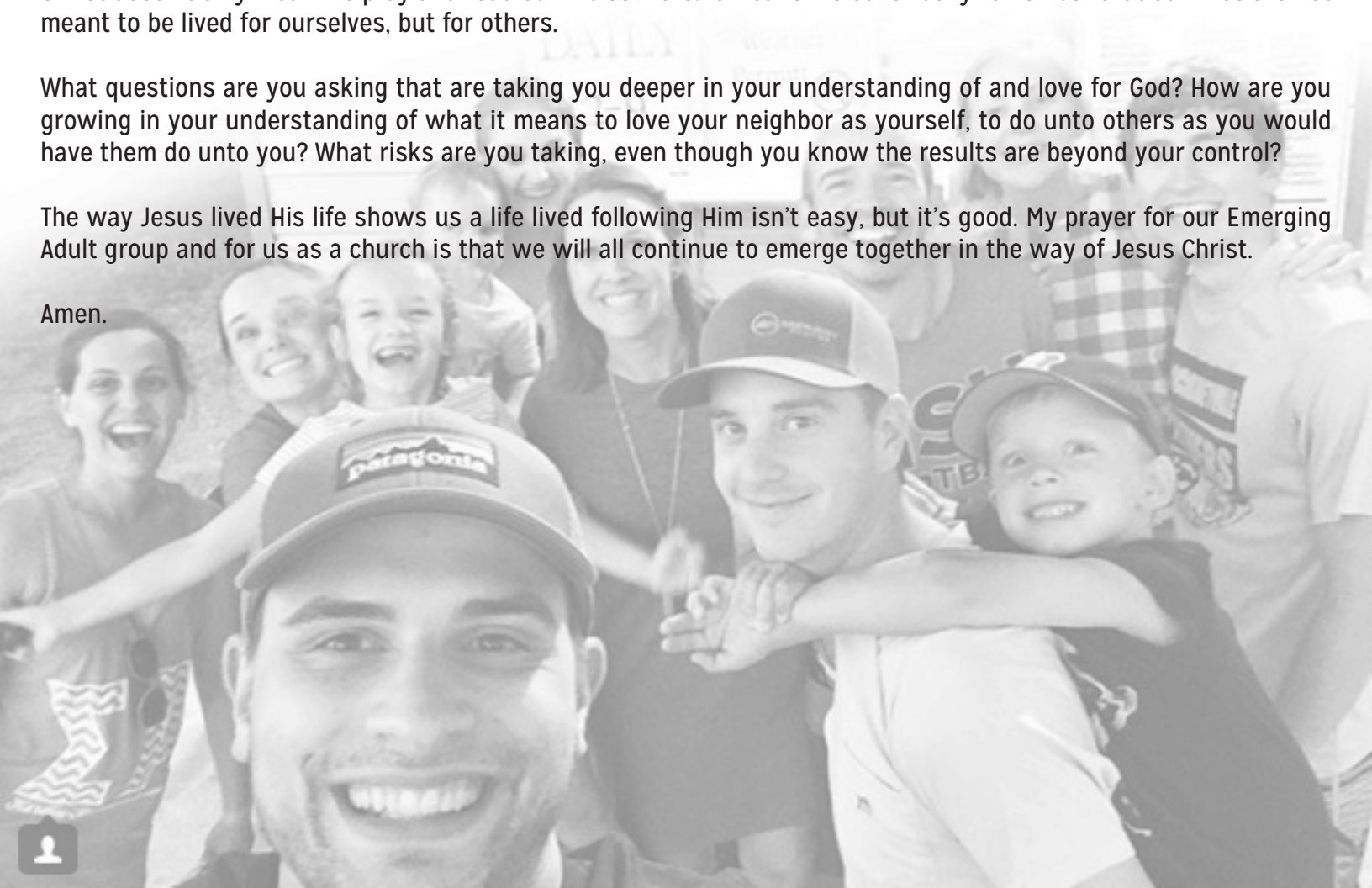
In Colossians 2:6-7 Paul writes, “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” In my mind, this is the definition of an emerging adult and my vision for our group. I want all people to receive Christ and also understand that receiving Christ Jesus as Lord is not the end of our faith journey, but the beginning. As we grow as humans, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, we are continually emerging into who God has created us to be.

No matter your age, I ask you the question, what aspect of your life is emerging? How are you growing and strengthening the faith you were taught. It is important that we continue to mature, not just as adults, but as followers of Christ. To continue living our lives in Him, knowing that discipleship costs us something. Maturing in Christ doesn’t only mean we pray and read our Bibles more. It means we continually remember that our lives are not meant to be lived for ourselves, but for others.

What questions are you asking that are taking you deeper in your understanding of and love for God? How are you growing in your understanding of what it means to love your neighbor as yourself, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you? What risks are you taking, even though you know the results are beyond your control?

The way Jesus lived His life shows us a life lived following Him isn’t easy, but it’s good. My prayer for our Emerging Adult group and for us as a church is that we will all continue to emerge together in the way of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

By Janie Sellers

Earth Day 2018 has reminded us once again of the beauty and wonder of this world God has given us and of our responsibility to care for it. Psalm 24:1 declares, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and all those who live in it." God placed the first human beings in the Garden and commanded them to nurture and protect it. All Christians recognize the strong connections between God and humankind, between freedom and responsibility, and between faith and action. This planet does not belong to us---it is God's creation, and we must treat it as such. Yet, we have increasingly abused the earth and neglected our stewardship of this magnificent gift. The problems we have helped to create for the earth are not simply scientific or economic, but they are basic moral issues. Father Thomas Berry has observed: "If the water is polluted, it can neither be drunk nor used for baptism."

The Creation Care Ministry Team was established with three goals in mind:

- 1) Inform our membership about the biblical command to care for God's creation
- 2) Challenge our people to accept God's call to be faithful stewards of this good earth
- 3) Promote opportunities for all of us to act responsibly in ways which show our commitment to God's beautiful gift.

Our first project was placing recycle containers throughout the church and encouraging people to use them. Thanks to so many of you who have consistently used these containers and thereby helped recycle our glass, plastic, and paper goods. Keep up the good work--and encourage your friends to participate. Just imagine how many bags of trash we have eliminated by recycling!

Next, we supported the effort to convince our City to begin curbside recycling, which would make it much easier for families to recycle. That effort failed, but we will try again, because it would greatly decrease the incredible waste occurring when recyclables are placed in the trash.

Now we want to offer a new challenge: Track Your Trash! How many bags of trash do you discard every week? How many bags of glass, plastic, and paper do you recycle per week? There is much we can all do to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Make it your personal goal to recycle more than you put in the trash! And ask for recycle containers at your place of work, too. Teach your friends and co-workers the importance of preserving our planet.

Please make a commitment to do everything in your power to help keep this good earth the magnificent and beautiful place God intended. And watch for an announcement about our next big event!

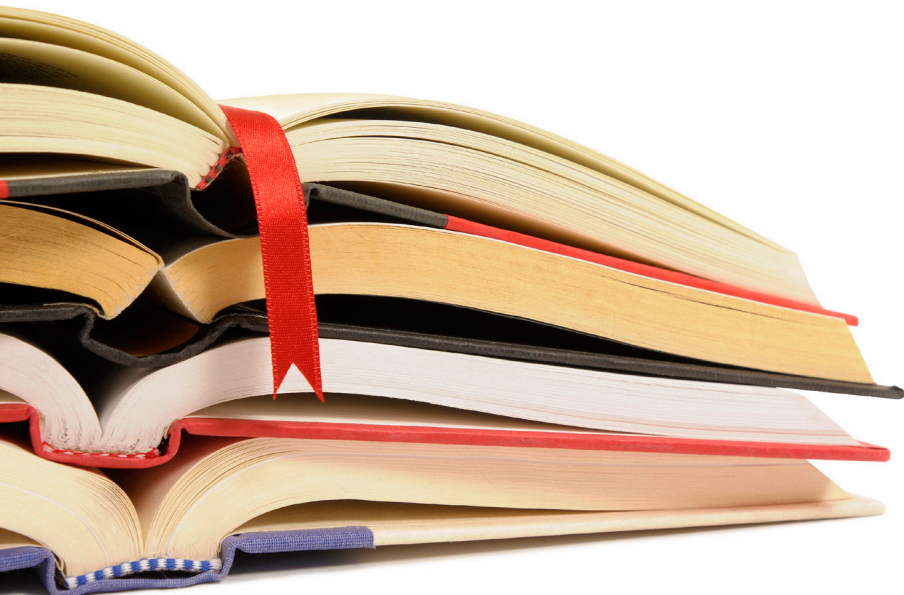


SENIOR JOURNALS

On May 20, we will be celebrating the senior class of 2018 in our morning worship service. As these students will stand in front of the congregation, I am glad they get to look out in the pews and see the many adults who have made significant impacts in their lives. The young people in our church have the support of a great community of faith where women and men serve as mentors, friends, and family. You have led them in Sunday school, missions, camps, and in your neighborhood. You have taught them Bible stories and life lessons. You have taken care of their scraped knees and hearts that needed comfort. You have walked through these moments not only with these seniors, but with their parents and families as well. As these students graduate, we do not forget them or leave them on their own. We are still connected to them in a real and powerful way. Worship on Senior Sunday is not intended to simply be a recognition service, but serve as a commission and blessing to these young people as they graduate. We bless them in this time of transition and send them into the world to live out the gospel and their calling. It is important we celebrate this rite of passage and show these young people we love them and we will continue to love them.

As a part of what we do for our graduating seniors, we give each senior a journal which will be filled with memories, encouragements, and words from the people at FBC. Please write a prayer, blessing, encouragement, or recount a shared experience. Your message does not have to be lengthy to be meaningful.

From May 3-18, these journals will be available across from the church office for you to come write a few words for these great kids. I hope you will take just a few minutes over the next several weeks to write something. Whether you know one of these seniors well or not at all, these words do matter. They matter because just a few words can remind these seniors, and us, that we do not walk our roads alone. We walk together down the long road of following Jesus.



class of
2018

Cody Brock

Hannah Brock

Stephanie Gustafson

Zachery Gustafson

Haylee Jones

Michael Lester

Kaylie Magnuson

Jack Patterson

Claire Preston

Claire Siewert

Trey Smith

GAME ON!

VACATION
BIBLE
SCHOOL

It is so hard to believe summer is almost here! During the summer, one of the most exciting things we do in the Preschool and Children's Ministries is Vacation Bible School. Maybe you can remember some of the songs you sang at VBS and the special meaning they had, or maybe you made your decision to follow Christ during that special week (or two weeks)! Whatever your memories are, we hope you will take some time and reflect on them. We are fortunate to hear about so many of those great and special memories and these are reminders to us of the importance this week is in the lives and spiritual growth of our children.

This year, VBS will be Monday, June 4 through Thursday, June 7. We will start each morning at 9 a.m. and end at noon on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Thursday we will extend our day for half an hour and conclude the week with our final Worship Rally and program. The Worship Rally will begin at 11:45 a.m. and will be finished by 12:30 p.m.

This year's theme is "Game On" where we will be "Gearing up for life's big game." We will start each day with a Worship Rally and then break into age groups where we will go to Bible Study, Missions, Recreation, Music, Crafts, and of course Snacks!

We know the summer gets busy and packed with many fun activities, but we hope you will make this week a priority. Whether you are able to volunteer or have children or grandchildren who can attend, we hope you will mark off June 4 - 7 and come get your "Game On!"





PRESCHOOL CHOIR PROGRAM

Wednesday, May 16 at 6:20 p.m.

Chapel

Open House to follow in Welcome Center

KINDERGARTEN - 5TH GRADE CHOIR PROGRAM

Sunday, May 20 at 6:00 p.m.

Sanctuary

Reception to follow in Dining Room

LOOKING AHEAD

by Mike Greenfield

Summer is rapidly approaching and with it comes several exciting opportunities for our church family to be together. The Sunday night following VBS, June 10, we will gather at the swimming pool at HSU for hamburgers and of course visiting! Well, the pool is an option for some, but eating and visiting are my plans (unless my grandson thinks otherwise!)

Wednesday Fun Night at the FLC will begin on June 13. This has become a highlight of the summer as we just eat and play together as a family. Bowling, skating, basketball, and of course dodgeball will be the programming for the evening. The meals are fairly simple, but delicious and a great time to fellowship around the table.

July 1 will feature an evening of patriotic music and a watermelon feast. The sanctuary choir will present a variety of patriotic songs and it promises to be an inspiring evening.

On July 26, we will have our third Prayer for the City event at noon in the dining room.

MORE WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED

There are numerous ways you can stay connected to what is going on at First Baptist. Of course, by reading this you are already familiar with FirstWords, but we hope you know about the other ways you can find information about the church. The best place to start is the church website, www.fbcabilene.org. Here you will find the church calendar, information about upcoming events, and specific things from each ministry area. Facebook, twitter, and Instagram are also social media tools we use to get the word out. Search each site for FBC Abilene and you might be surprised what all you will find.





Tuesday, May 15, 2018 - Noon
FBC Dining Room
Program: Linda Chisholm
Paws for People

ADULT DAY AT BCBA (LUEDERS)

Tuesday, May 8, 2018. Cost \$8, pay at registration. Speaker, Dr. Jeff Reid, Associate Pastor/Senior Adults Pastor at Pioneer Drive Baptist Church, Testimony by Darrin Ray, Pastor of Education and Senior Adults at Wylie Baptist Church. Bus will leave University Place parking lot at 8:15 a.m. To sign up, call Jeannie Wesley at 675-8107.

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

May 1, 13 years
Daphne Garcia
GLO Teacher

May 5, 4 years
Tina Pyburn
Counseling Receptionist

May 26, 18 years
Teresa Garcia
GLO Cook

EVENT CALENDAR:

MAY

- 3-17 H. S. Senior Journals
(outside church offices)
- 6 Personnel Committee
Called Church Conference
in Dining Room
- 8 Rockin' Moms
ACHS Band & Choir Concert
- 9 Buildings & Grounds Committee
H. S. Senior Recordings
- 10 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 13 Vote on City Light Re-visioning Plan
- 15 LLL
Finance Committee
Deacons' Meeting
- 16 GLO Board Meeting
Music Friends Program/Open House
- 20 H. S. Senior Sunday
New Member Lunch
AISD Baccalaureate
Missions Committee
Children's Choir Program
- 21 Sr. Adult Trip/Midland Rockhounds Game
- 24 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 28 Church Offices Closed
- 29-6/2 VBS Set Up

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

April 2018

<u>Budget</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Required	\$263,990	\$1,056,803
Given	\$324,951	\$1,102,741



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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