

# FIRSTwords

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



## Vacation Bible School will soon be here!

As you read this, we are in the planning stages and recruiting volunteers for a wonderful week!

On Sunday, May 28, the sanctuary will already be transformed into our Twists & Turns Worship Rally area so you will get a little taste of what our children will enjoy through the week. Beginning Tuesday, May 30 through Friday, June 2, there will be a little more activity or might we say, a lot more activity around church than usual, as we will have children ages 4 - completed 5th grade each morning for Vacation Bible School. We will start every morning at 9 a.m. and end at noon on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. On Friday, we will extend our day for half an hour and conclude the week with our final Worship Rally and program. The Final Worship Rally will begin Friday at 11:45 a.m. and will be finished by 12:30 p.m.

This year, we will experience many "Twists & Turns" as we realize that "Following Jesus Changes the Game." We will start each morning in the sanctuary with Twists & Turns Worship Rally and then break into age groups where we will rotate through Bible Study at the Game Room; Wild Card Crafts; Level Up Music; Ready, Set, Rec; Skip Ahead Snacks; and Multi-Player Missions!

We ask that you be in prayer for the many children and volunteers who will be involved. We ask specifically that you pray for: the children who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; for those who already have made Him their Lord and Savior to grow in their walk; the volunteers who are leading Bible study & missions as they speak the words God puts on their hearts; the ones leading music and recreation to have patience with the children, as these times are very active, yet very meaningful to many; those leading crafts, that the activities they have for the children will help bring understanding, especially for those children who need to see things rather than just hear; those who provide the snacks for us, as eating and fellowshiping together can be such an important part of being a community of believers; and the leaders who walk, talk, and listen to the children as they go to each area.

**Thank you for being a church who not only prays for events such as VBS,  
but continues to invest in the lives of children and their families.**



# A WIDE AND UNBROKEN NET

by *Brandon Hudson*

What a joy it was to worship with so many of you on our first Easter Sunday together! I loved watching our families flower the cross while we recounted again the story of redemption that comes on Easter. It was a wonderful week of holy experiences with our Lenten Lunches, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday experiences together which culminated in beautiful worship together!

We make a big deal about Easter because the resurrection is the powerful reminder that we are called, as in the waters of our baptisms, to walk in newness of life. That is what we celebrate every Sunday, that we are people who have been given new life and called to walk in a new way.

As we continue to walk together in our newness, what ways are we being called to explore God's action in our lives in new ways? How are we being called to be salt and light? What people are we being called to serve and to walk alongside?

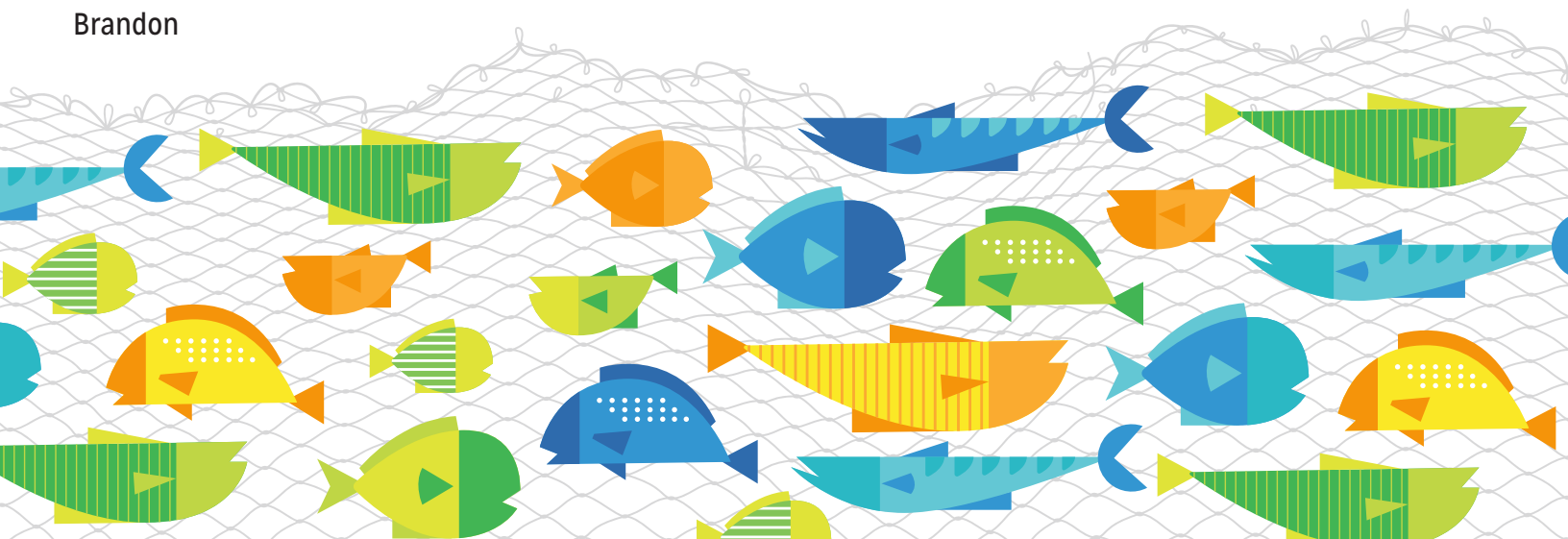
One of the resurrection stories is the story of Jesus with some of the disciples on the shores of the Sea of Tiberius. In this story we read of Peter's restoration after his denial, but we also read about a miraculous catch of fish. There were 153 fish in that net, John tells us in his gospel, and yet the net was untorn. This is a story about the wideness of God's love. Many scholars believe that 153 represents all the known species of fish at the time, so this story tells us there is no one who is outside of God's net. Furthermore, the untorn net tells us that with the Holy Spirit's help, we can fish widely and remain united.

This month, as we continue together, may we widen our vision and commit our hearts to unity. May we be ready for all those God brings into our paths while we continue to foster the love of our community and for the world.

I love walking in this new life with you all and am excited to see what God will continue to do!

Love,

Brandon



# GIVING OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

In the fast-paced, highly-technological world we live in, writing a check and putting it in an envelope seems totally foreign to many of us now. But here at the church, we have used the same tried and true system of offering envelopes for folks to have an easy way to give their tithes and offerings for the support of the ministry budget. So as technology changes, so should the church change to keep up with what folks are doing in other areas of their lives.

Online giving is not entirely new to what we have been offering as a way to give. On the church website, [www.fbcabilene.org](http://www.fbcabilene.org), there is a link on the top row of options that takes you to the giving page for the church. The link is in a green box and says "Give Online." Simply click on this link and it will walk you through the process. Of course, by using this method it requires a credit or debit card, both of which have a 2.2% fee associated with it and we are hoping folks will include that in their thinking as they use this method. We also see this as a convenient way for people to give, but do not ever encourage anyone to accumulate debt on a credit card in the process. As with the traditional giving methods of the church, only you and the finance office will have access to your giving records.

Another option is to set up a bank draft that would take a set amount out of your account and put in the church account on a set time frame. This option does not have any associated fees with it and also takes out the "remember to do it" factor. Some have set this up like a payroll deduction and really like not having to do anything else, but know they are supporting the work of the church consistently. Jeannie Jowers in the finance office can help you set this up or answer questions you might have. This is really convenient when you are travelling or want to simplify your life.

## GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

Regular gifts of tithes and offerings to the church are the most important forms of giving. These gifts make it possible for the church to continue to carry out the ministries of Jesus Christ at home and around the world. However, you may have a desire to do something special and make a gift which bears fruit year after year. If so, the First Baptist Church Foundation can help you accomplish that desire. As a result of the interest expressed by some church members for a means to make possible long-term, deferred, or special gifts for the future ministries of the church, the Foundation was established by the church in 1993.

The Foundation is an entity through which you may make a special or deferred gift for the church or specific ministries of the church. The Foundation is administered by an eleven-member board comprised of the five church trustees and six lay members nominated by the Committee on Committees and elected by the church on a three-year rotating basis. The investment and management of the funds of the Foundation is performed by HighGround Advisors (formally the Baptist Foundation of Texas). The corpus or principal of any gift is used for whatever purpose the donor designates. The interest earned by the total amount in the Foundation can be used for various church ministries as agreed upon by the Foundation Board and the Finance Committee, or it can be rolled back into the total assets.

The Foundation has two main areas of focus, the ministries of the church and the missional direction through Give Hope and Faces and Places. As well, there are several gifts which were given and designated for specific purposes like GLO, Counseling, City Light, FLC and a few others. The foundation board distributes grants twice a year for requests that meet the purpose of the foundation. The Missions Committee of the church is responsible for the distribution of all funds in the Faces and Places Endowment. The designated gifts obviously go to the specific designated group. Gifts can be made to any of these funds or a new fund could be established for a specific purpose.

## LIFE-LONG STEWARDSHIP

Just as we are to be good stewards of what God has entrusted us with while we are alive, we should also be just as involved in being a good steward of our estate as well. If each of us were to tithe of our estate as we have tithed of our weekly income, the foundation would be able to support many new and exciting missional opportunities and ministries for decades to come.

However, statistics show that 70% of us will die without a well-designed Will or Trust. Inadequately designed estate plans leaves the state in charge of the distribution of your assets and will diminish the effect of your stewardship and limit the eternal impact you could have.

For more information about the FBC Foundation, please contact Mike Greenfield (325-675-8117) or [mike.greenfield@fbcabilene.org](mailto:mike.greenfield@fbcabilene.org).

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CITY LIGHT

*In an effort to be the presence of Christ in our community, City Light engages with neighbors to help with their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth. We do so through community meals, case management, showers, Rockin' Moms, Sunday morning worship, and a culinary academy.*



## **7,544 MEALS SERVED**

Includes MWF meals, Sunday Breakfast, Continental Breakfast, Sack Lunches, and City Light Market\*



## **564 VOLUNTEER HOURS**



## **21 ROCKIN MOMS**

## **PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:**



## **28 HOUSEHOLDS**

helped with rent and utilities



## **300 WALK-INS**

bus passes, clothing and other



## **240 MAIL**

Delivered and checked



## **83 SHOWERS**

*April 2023*



## **MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT:**

On Friday, April 14, 2023, Harley, Herb, Lovie, and Sean graduated from the City Light Culinary Academy! We are very proud of their successful completion of this 12-week job training program. Special thanks to City Light staff, volunteers, and board members for celebrating these students well. The interest meeting for the next class will be held at City Light on May 2 at 9 a.m.



## COLLEGE SENIOR RECOGNITION

Sunday, May 7, we will take time in worship to celebrate our seniors graduating from college. It's always a bittersweet moment because it means several of them are leaving. I'm so grateful for the ways in which these seniors have contributed to the ministries of our church and helped enhance our college ministry. Thank you, church, for being people who love and support college students.

## HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR RECOGNITION SERVICE MAY 21, 2023

On Sunday, May 21, during the morning worship service, we will be honoring our High School Seniors as they prepare to graduate. As in years past, we have given the church an opportunity to write words of encouragement to our graduating seniors and give the journal to them as a part of this service. The past couple of years, we had the journals online and that way folks did not have to come to the church to write their notes. This has worked really well, so we will continue to utilize this method. On the church website, there is a page specifically designed for this purpose. You can simply go to this page, find each of the students you would like to share a personal word of encouragement with, and write in the space provided. After you finish writing, you will click on the submit button and it will be sent in. Then, the submissions will be printed, bound and given to the students on May 21, so we need all entries done by Friday, May 19 @ NOON.

So, go ahead right now and get it done! [Click here to go to the journal page.](#)

First Baptist Church of Abilene TX » High School Senior Sunday Journals ([fbcabilene.org](http://fbcabilene.org))





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



## **FBC ABILENE & HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SPRING 2023**

Thanks for blessing our 2x4's in your Sunday school classes on April 23 and to our children who officially started our build in worship with celebration! Please continue to pray for the building of this home. On Saturday, May 6, our inside walls will be built on the church south parking lot. Then, on Saturday, May 13, we will move the walls and stand them up at the new location on Cedar Street. We still need volunteers for those build days. Also, after these three Saturdays of service, we need your small groups, Sunday school classes, service organizations, and prayer groups to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity for a day of service. Start planning now how your special group can help continue the build of this home.

## **NORTH MACEDONIA JUNE 9-18, 2023**

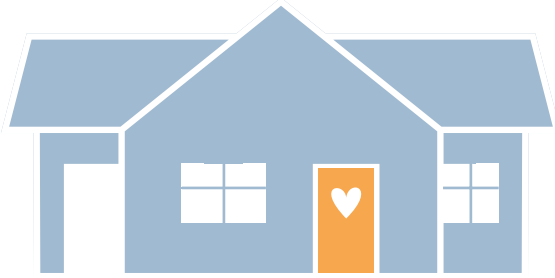
FBC heads back to North Macedonia in June. Please pray for this team as they join in with the important work of Alicia, Jeff, and Ethan Lee serving in North Macedonia. This team will be working with Poraka, a home for support of persons with intellectual disabilities; North Macedonia Food Bank; Aya Farms; and many other relationship building opportunities to encourage the work of the Lee's.

Please pray for our team:

John Moore  
Todd Wilson  
Jaxon Craig  
Martha Brown  
Ken Brown  
Beverly Warren  
John Warren



# 4 FBC MISSION SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES COMING IN **2023**



## **FBC FRIENDSHIP HOUSE CHILDREN'S BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB JUNE 19-22, 2023 - 9:00 TO 11:00 A.M.**

A team is needed to help do a Children's Backyard Bible Club for the College Heights neighborhood at the FBC Friendship House on Orange Street.

Gina and Trevor Allen will be leading the 2nd annual Children's Backyard Bible Club and they need your help! Come join this team and be the Gospel in action to our neighbors.

Call the Missions' Office (325-675-8112) to sign up for this team. More details and meeting times will be out soon.

## **FBC FAMILY MISSION TRIP TO MCALLEN, TEXAS JULY 9-18, 2023**

Please begin to pray how you can be involved in any or all of these opportunities and be on the watch for more details.

If you have questions or would like to be put on the list for any of these opportunities, you may contact the Beth in Missions' office anytime at 325-675-8112 or [beth.young@fbcabilene.org](mailto:beth.young@fbcabilene.org).



**Please begin to pray how you can be involved in any or all of these opportunities and watch for more details coming soon.**

**If you have questions or would like to be put on the list for any of these opportunities, please contact the Missions' Office (325-675-8112).**

# May

- 3 Women's Retreat Team Meeting
- 6 Habitat House Build Day
- 7 College Graduation Recognition  
in Morning Worship  
Personnel Committee Meeting  
Recreation Board Meeting  
Ordination Service for Austen Winfrey
- 10 Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting  
Grant-in-Aid Team Meeting  
2-year-old and Preschool Choir Program
- 11 First Friends Preschool  
End of Year Program
- 13 Habitat House Move Day
- 14 Mother's Day
- 16 Finance Committee Meeting  
Deacons' Meeting
- 17 Last Wednesday Night Meal/Activities
- 21 High School Senior Recognition  
in Morning Worship  
Lord's Supper  
AISD Baccalaureate Service  
Mission Committee Meeting
- 22-24 VBS Set-Up
- 29 Church Offices Closed for Memorial Day
- 30-6/1 Vacation Bible School

## Summer FUN NIGHTS at the flc

June 7 – July 26  
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Meal served 5:30 - 6:15 p.m.  
Come have supper then bowl, skate,  
play in gym, or just sit and visit!

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

May 5, 9 years  
**Tina Hoffman**  
Counseling Receptionist

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

April 2023

<u>Budget</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Required	\$ 296,060	\$ 1,110,240
Given	\$ 297,628	\$ 980,644

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



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
CHURCH • ABILENE

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