



FIRSTWORDS

VBS 2026: ILLUMINATION STATION MAY 26-29, 2026

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 24, we will be worshipping in the sanctuary, where the platform will have been transformed into bursts of vibrant colors so you will get a little taste of what our children will enjoy through the week. Beginning Tuesday, May 26 through Friday, May 29, 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, through our theme, Illumination Station, we will be "Shining A Light On Who Jesus Really Is." We will start each morning in the sanctuary with our Illumination Station Worship Rally and then break into age groups where we will rotate through Spotlight Bible Study, hearing Bible stories teaching us who Jesus is; Crafts at Kaleidoscope Crafts; Music at Mirror Ball Music; Recreation at Suncatcher Rec; Snacks at Neon Snacks; and Missions at Glow-in-the-Dark Missions!

Continued from Cover.

We ask you to be in prayer for the many children and volunteers who will be involved. We specifically ask for you to 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 and touch 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; 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.



Dear FBC Family,

This summer, we invite you to pray together for what God wants next for FBC Abilene. From the beginnings of FBC, we have been woven intricately with the story of Abilene and the Big Country. Whenever crises have hit our city, state, or nation, FBC Abilene has met the moment.

When the city did not have adequate medical facilities to account for the needs of the growing population of Abilene, FBC led the way in helping to establish what is now Hendrick Medical Center (originally West Texas Baptist Sanitation). Pastor Millard Jenkins even invited George W. Truett, pastor of FBC Dallas and major fundraiser of Baylor Hospital in Dallas, to come and help raise money for the new hospital.

When divorces were on the rise in the Big Country fifty years ago, FBC creatively started one of the first counseling centers connected to a church. We wanted to provide affordable mental and emotional health counseling to people who needed it most. Who knows how many marriages and families have benefitted over the past fifty years.

When television spread to most American homes, FBC Abilene stepped up to create the television ministry we have today. Again, we were one of the first churches in the US to have such a ministry. Today it is common for churches to have a livestream of the service, but we were one of the first. It allows people who cannot make it to church to still be able to worship and be connected to a church.

When families started having to go to dual incomes to try and make ends meet, our church stepped up with providing day care

services known as God's Little Ones (GLO) Daycare. Providing affordable, safe, and Christ-centered childcare is still a huge need for families today.

Over and over again our church has looked outside itself to bless our community and our world. We could fill pages full of stories of impact through FLC, City Light, and other ministries of our church, not to mention the excellence in worship each Sunday. All of these ministries were made possible through the prompting and following of the Holy Spirit. We believed these to be God's will at the time and God provided the way.

We trust God will do it again. This summer, we are launching a Summer prayer campaign and sermon series called "Your Will be Done." The sermon series will cover nine different call stories in the Bible. Each week, we will be emailing out a devotional and guiding question as well as scriptures to wrestle with all asking the question "God what is Your will for FBC Abilene?" Later this month, journals will be available for you to take home and begin writing down thoughts and ideas the Spirit is putting upon you. At the end of the summer, we will ask you to bring those thoughts and ideas as we will discuss and record data from you about what God might be inviting our church to do in the next few years. Then the staff and I will analyze the data and present it back to you. We trust God will reveal patterns through the spirit for His will to be done in our church and in Abilene as it is in Heaven.

Grace and Peace,

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



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

by Mike Greenfield

30 years ago, First Baptist Church took a chance on a young minister who had no church staff experience when you voted to call me to join the staff as the Minister to Young Adults and Outreach in 1996. Up to that point, all my ministry experience had been in Collegiate Ministry. The committee: Chair Debbie McFarland, Kathy Adams, Randall Bingaman, Jerry Bingham, Linda Cannon, Darrell Roy, and Beth Smith either saw potential in me, or just didn't ask the right questions, but they decided to take a chance anyway. I am so glad they did, for it has truly been a blessing for me and my family.

When I came, I did not have a set timeline in mind, but kind of figured that pastors moved around and so at some point, I would probably do the same. So, in 2004 when Dr. Christopher and the Personnel Committee asked me to change positions and become the Pastor for Administration and Spiritual Development and you affirmed that idea, it provided me with a chance to move and do something different. So, a move was in order, but all I had to do was move offices down the hall! Looking back, that move came at a good time in my life. I felt like I was ready for more, and more was what I got. My degree from Texas Tech is in business management and well, things just fell into place. The move came with a new office, but more importantly it came with the best ministry assistant in the world, Debra Clemmer. I am quick to say that every day she makes me look good and I would not have been able to survive this long without her able assistance.

The phrase, "I am Blessed" has become somewhat popular and at times maybe overused. But over the past couple of weeks, as you have paused to acknowledge my 30 years of service, it is the perfect phrase for me. I have been, am, and continue to be blessed by you, my church family. I have been blown away by your generosity, notes of encouragement, hugs, handshakes, and expressions of thanks and love. I really am at loss for words as to how to best convey my gratitude to and for each of you.

So, from the bottom of our hearts, Patti and I say thank you for honoring us and we look forward to what God has in store as we continue to minister together.

Student Ministry Update

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR SUNDAY

On Sunday, May 17, FBC will honor our High School Seniors during our morning worship service. As they prepare for their finals and graduation, I hope you will take time to help celebrate them on all their accomplishments! Please pray for these students as they move on to their respective colleges and careers. During the next few weeks, a table will be set up in the Welcome Center holding journals and Bibles for the graduating students. We invite you to write words of encouragement and support to our graduating seniors in their journals and highlight your favorite verse(s) in their Bibles with your name right beside it. Thank you for the home you have created for these Seniors by being an amazing church family!

COLLEGE GRADUATION RECOGNITION

During the worship service on May 3, FBC will honor our graduating college students! Over the last few years, these students have worked hard in their studies, and now the finish line is in sight! FBC will be giving these students a few gifts to show our support including a Bible, a book, and more. I hope you can join us on this special Sunday to help us encourage our graduates! Thank you for welcoming these students to our family here at FBC. Thank you for being the body of Christ!

YOUTH CAMP 2026

Summer is almost here, which means it is almost time for Youth camp! This year, instead of having two separate camps for High School and Middle School, we will be making one trip all together to Lake Brownwood. We will join Horizon Camps led by our own Jerry Hendrix from June 16-20. Total cost is \$300 with scholarships available. Deposits of \$100 are due on May 24. Final payments are due on June 7. Camp is always a blast and a great opportunity for the students to grow closer with God and with one another. I highly recommend you encourage your student(s) to sign up for this trip and tell them to invite their friends!



HUNTER BROWN
Pastor for Youth

Counselor Spotlight: LUISA TRUJILLO



When I joined MOCE in August 2021, I was given the opportunity to grow in depth and determination in my work with clients. I'm grateful that my personal and professional journey bridges countries, cultures, values, and traditions which have shaped my workstyle in such a way that I'm able to more closely relate to others as they seek support on their journey when facing hardship.

I began my counseling career in Mexico in 1994 and became certified in 1995. While finishing school and earning my certification, I was able to start a counseling ministry at a boarding school for underserved students. This was the same boarding school where I once lived while pursuing my own education in psychology. I also have had a short-lived private practice before moving to the United States in 1997.

My passion for counseling began early. At 15, I left my small hometown of about 3 thousand people to attend high school in a larger city with a population of close to 3 million people.

There, I lived with nuns in a boarding school for eight years. I initially thought I would become a nurse, but everything changed after taking a psychology course and being deeply inspired by my teacher. From that moment, I knew I had found my calling.

After moving to Texas, I had to start over. While raising my young daughter, I learned English through ESL classes, earned my GED, and continued my education while working at a hospital for four years. Through perseverance, I earned my Master's Degree in Counseling and Human Development from Hardin-Simmons University in 2012. I completed my practicum with Abilene ISD and gained additional clinical experience at Regional Victim Crisis Center. Looking back, I would describe myself as very determined, and over time, I have grown in both confidence and clarity in my work.

Today, I am especially passionate about supporting parent-child relationships and helping adults process childhood trauma. I am committed to helping clients move beyond early limitations and grow into the fullness of who they are. One of the greatest joys of my work is witnessing transformation and seeing healing where there once was long-standing pain and struggle.

I hope more people come to see therapy as a supportive, shame-free space for care and growth. I believe stigma often keeps people from the help they deserve and I want to be part of changing that narrative. Serving at MOCE is deeply meaningful to me. I see my ability to help others as a gift, and I value how much I continue to grow alongside my clients.

Outside of work, I treasure family, faith, and community. Coming from a large family of eleven siblings, I learned early the value of close relationships, and I continue to nurture that same closeness in my own life. Whether through shared meals, prayer, games, or meaningful conversation, I value connection deeply. I also continue my personal and spiritual growth through art classes and weekly Bible study with a mentor. I also remain closely connected with family across borders. My message is simple. I believe everyone already has what they need to be healed and whole; they may just need the right support and environment to realize it.

CHURCH PRAYER LIST PROCESS

Here at the church, we try very hard to visit folks when they are in the hospital. Both the staff and the hospital visitation team go almost every day during the week and many times on the weekends as well. The hospital/prayer list is created by Suzanne or one of the other ministry assistants and sent via email to those who wish to receive the list each day. For many years, the list was updated each day after a phone call to the Chaplain's office at Hendrick. That office would pull a list of all patients who when admitted to the hospital stated that they were a member of First Baptist. So, if you always wondered how we knew, there you go!

A few months ago, the process changed and they no longer supply us with that information. Now, if one of our church members goes to the hospital, we either find out from them, or from a friend or family member who lets us know. However, if no one lets us know, then we are left in the dark and visits are not made. We do respect your privacy, but also would like to be able to pray for you.

So, if you are at Hendrick Medical Center, Encompass Rehabilitation Hospital, or one of the short-term care facilities, then please call or have someone call the church and let us know so we can visit. If you simply want prayers, but no visitors, let us know and we will put you on the list with that information.

SEND INFORMATION TO:

Suzanne Shaw – 325-673-5031 or Suzanne.shaw@fbcabilene.org

Ministry Spotlight:

CITY LIGHT

Community Ministries

SUNDAY BREAKFAST: 790

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST: 622

COMMUNITY LUNCH: 2,302

PRODUCE: 721

VOLUNTEER HOURS: 930

SHOWERS: 252

CLOTHING ITEMS: 494

CALLS AND VOICEMAILS: 565

MAIL CHECKS: 326

FRONT DESK WALK-INS: 3,293

DINING ROOM WALK-INS: 2,493



**Please be in prayer
about joining us
to celebrate**

CITY LIGHT

**on May 5 from
8am- 8pm as we raise
funds through Abilene
Gives!**

Abilene Gives is a special day of giving that makes a significant impact on nonprofit organizations serving our community. Join us at City Light for this festive occasion and be part of something meaningful!



<https://www.abilenegives.org/organizations/city-light-community-ministries>

The Sisters' Table

The Empty Tomb

At this month's Sisters' Table, fourteen women gathered around a simple but powerful truth: the tomb is empty. In Matthew 28:5–6, the angel's words to the women still echo today, "He is not here; He has risen, just as He said." What began as a moment of fear and uncertainty became the greatest hope the world has ever known.

After the resurrection, Jesus revealed what that hope looks like in our lives. He meets us personally, just as He did with Mary. He strengthens our faith, as He did for Thomas. He restores us from our failures, as He did for Peter. He gives us purpose through the call to go and build His church. And He empowers us with His Spirit, reminding us that though He ascended, we are never left alone.

The resurrection was not the end of the story. It was the beginning of our mission.

Each woman received a small basket filled with treats and a special cross, lovingly handmade by Ron Harden. Together, we created a meaningful snack using donuts to represent the empty tomb, with Jesus standing in front and a cross placed on top. It was a simple reminder of a profound truth: the grave could not hold Him.



please be in prayer for the **MEXICO CITY MISSION TRIP TEAM**

Betty Coffey
Britney Tucker

Stella Balis
Barry Moak

Greg Young
John Moore

Javier Perez

Things to Pray for...

SATURDAY –

Pray for safe travel (Van, Plane, Bus) for the team.
Pray for the team to have happy stomachs the whole week.

SUNDAY –

Pray for the Church service in Mexico City.

MONDAY –

Pray for day one of the children's ministry.
Pray for the medical team (lab reports, pediatric visits, and patient exams).

TUESDAY –

Pray for day two of the children's ministry.

WEDNESDAY –

Pray for day three of the children's ministry.
Pray for safe travel as the team takes the kids bowling.

THURSDAY –

Pray for a special project and the home visits that day.
Pray for the teachers and the EduK teaching team to be encouraged by FBC team.

FRIDAY–

Pray for the team as they explore Mexico City with the children.

SATURDAY –

Pray for safe travels home (Bus, Plane, Van).





Global Opportunities

NORTH MACEDONIA – SEPTEMBER 4-13, 2026

A small team is being formed to encourage and work alongside Alicia and Jeff Lee serving in Skopje, North Macedonia. The tentative dates for this project are September 4-13th. Costs, details, and final dates will be out soon. Begin praying about how God might be calling you to join this small team of 8 to 9 people. You can follow Jeff Lee on Facebook and Instagram to see the work they do on the farms and other ministries. Alicia and Jeff support and help with Poraka (Adult Group Home), Skopje Food Bank, Macedonia Orphanage, Vineyards, Children's Home (Immanuel), Cultural Immersion International Church, and a few others.

CAMBODIA – OCTOBER 22-31, 2026

A small team is being formed to encourage and work alongside David and Lauren Bass serving in Cambodia. The tentative dates for this project are October 22- 31. Cost, details, and final dates will be out soon. Begin praying about how God might be calling you to join this small team of 6 to 8 people. David works for the Bible School and Lauren works with the library.

Our purpose will be to do anything that best encourages their ministry. If you have any questions, contact John Moore (john.moore@fbcabilene.org) or Ashley Adams (ashley.adams@fbcabilene.org)

God's Little Ones DAY ★ CARE

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

The Teacher of the Month of April was Judy Santibanez. Judy consistently goes above and beyond to provide the best care for every child. Her flexibility and willingness to step in wherever needed makes her an invaluable part of our team. Judy creates a warm, nurturing environment where children feel safe, supported, and encouraged to grow. She builds strong, trusting relationships with both the children and their families, and her positive attitude is felt throughout the center each day. Her dedication, teamwork, and genuine passion for early childhood education truly set her apart. We are grateful to have her as part of our GLO family.

GLO EVENTS APRIL

We are excited to share a summary of our April activities here at GLO Day Care! Throughout the month, the children enjoyed a variety of fun and engaging experiences designed to support their learning and development. April was filled with spring-themed activities, including arts and crafts, sensory play, and outdoor exploration. The children had the opportunity to learn about nature, weather changes, and new beginnings as we welcomed the spring season. We also incorporated hands-on activities that encouraged creativity, social interaction, and early learning skills.

One of the highlights of the month was our special spring celebration, where children participated in themed games, treats, and fun group activities. It was wonderful to see their excitement and joy as they engaged with their friends and teachers.





Please support
GLO
during #ABILENE GIVES

May 5, 2026

Early Giving starts April 27



abilenegives.org

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

May 5, 12 years

TINA HOFFMAN

Counseling Office Manager

May 17, 2 years

BRIANNA LEDERMAN

GLO Teacher

May 17, 2 years

SHARRON MCDOW

GLO Assistant Director

May 19, 1 year

TAMMIE DAVIS

GLO Teacher

May 30, 3 years

ELVA HUFFORD

GLO Teacher

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

April 2026

Budget	April	Year-to-Date
Required	\$253,100	\$1,096,400
Given	\$221,375	\$1,049,945

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

MAY

- 2** Habitat Build/1225 Plum
- 3** College Sr. Recognition in Morning Worship
Celebration Orchestra Family Lunch
Personnel Committee Meeting
Youth Progressive Dinner
- 9** Habitat Build/1225 Plum
- 10** Mother's Day
- 13** Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting
Grant-in-Aid Ministry Team Meeting
Preschool Choir Program
- 17** High School Sr. Recognition in Morning Worship
AISD Baccalaureate
Missions' Committee Meeting
- 18** MOCE Board Meeting
- 19** CLCM Board Meeting
Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 21** Men's Ministry Brown Bag Lunch
- 24** Lord's Supper
- 25** Church Offices Closed
- 26-29** Vacation Bible School
- 26** GLO Board Meeting
- 5/30-6/6** Mexico City Mission Trip



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE