

FIRST *words*

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

Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Sunday, November 18, 2018 | 5:30 p.m.
Taylor County Expo Center Display Building

Once again we will enjoy our Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Sunday evening, November 18 from 5:30-7:15 p.m. at the Expo Center Display Building. We will gather to give thanks for the many blessings of our gracious God and especially for our Nation and how God has shed His grace on us. This year's special guest will be former staff member and now Navy Chaplain, Lieutenant Sarah Greenfield, stationed at Joint Base Pearl Harbor. Lt. Greenfield will share her experiences of serving our country as a Chaplain to those who courageously serve us in the Pacific Fleet. Sarah will also share about her calling and gratitude for the ways Christ and our church have made a difference in her life. You will certainly be inspired and moved to gratitude.



In addition to sharing a great fellowship meal around the table, we will also observe the Lord's Supper. As we pass the bread and share the cup around our tables, we will truly celebrate our Thanksgiving meal in remembering the love, forgiveness, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Regardless of our circumstances this Thanksgiving, we can be filled with gratitude for how God has blessed us in the gift of Jesus Christ. We will leave with grateful hearts and be prepared for Thursday.

You should have or will shortly receive an invitation in the mail and we need your reservation by Monday, November 12 in order to make the necessary arrangements for seating and food. Reservations can be made with Debra, 325-675-8116 or debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org.

NOVEMBER 2018



FIRST BAPTIST
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words

FOR THE JOURNEY

Last fall, the church gave each member a copy of *The Blessed Life*. We are making the book available again. You may pick up a copy in the Welcome Center or in the Sanctuary Foyer. You may also call the church office and we will mail you a copy - we think it is that important. Perhaps you received a copy last fall, but in the busyness of life, never got to it. I invite you to find and read it this month. It can transform your Thanksgiving Season.

There are many ways to describe the "Blessed Life." Let's just say it isn't getting everything we want. It shows up when we think less of ourselves. The "Blessed Life" is living with gratitude, filled with God's grace and generosity. *The Blessed Life* looks at the blessings of generous living, which includes every area of our lives.

Here is a story about a person who discovered the "Blessed Life" after reading the book. This person owns a small business. At times he has struggled to get by. He doesn't make a salary. He works on commission, which can be scary. He shared the difference the book has made in his life which includes his marriage, being a dad, and using his gifts which helped us build a Habitat House. He even bought an audio copy of the book for drive time to jobs in other cities. He also shared the ways the book has made a difference in his financial giving. He has not received some financial windfall, but as he has trusted God with the "firstfruits" of his income, God has abundantly provided.

Here are some paraphrased excerpts from Chapter Twelve. Please hear, this is not proposing a gospel of prosperity. The excerpts are about being set free to live the "Blessed Life" of generosity.

The great paradox of the blessed life: When we give the "first fruits" or 10% of how God has blessed us without thought to whether we will receive, we receive. God has all the resources of the universe at His disposal. At the same time, God sees the poor who need to be fed, willing missionaries who need to be equipped and sent, and churches who are Christ's very body. God's eyes are roaming the earth, looking for faithful-hearted stewards through whom He can channel millions of dollars into His kingdom work.

Do you have such a heart? I can assure you that if you become a conduit for the funds God wants to channel to others, you and your family will be well taken care of by God.

God is after our hearts, and the evidence He has our hearts is this: We give simply to give rather than giving to receive; and we give because we want to bless people, help people, and enlarge the kingdom of God through His church. This, rather than reward, is our primary motive.

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This true motive of giving is the vital truth I see left out of many teachings on giving. All we hear is 'Give, and God will bless you.' But what about our hearts? What about selfishness? What about greed? What about fears and worries of the future? Isn't God trying to work those things out of our lives? Absolutely.

But when we come to the place where we say, 'Lord I just want to give to You because I love You and because of Your great love for me.' God responds by saying the same thing in return: 'I give and bless you because I love you and because you've shown I can trust you with my resources.'

The trap the tempter wants us to fall into is worshiping the blessings rather than the God who blesses. We fall into the subtle trap when we begin seeking after the blessings that come from God's hand, rather than seeking God's face. We can never allow the blessings to have our hearts. Our hearts must be wholly God's.

God can change us from takers into givers. We were born takers; we are transformed by grace into givers. God wants us to be generous, gracious, kindhearted, and compassionate. When God does a work in our hearts - we begin to give simply because we want to - then we actually will be blessed so we can give more and more to the kingdom of God.

Giving our forgiveness, our compassion, or our money is a way we imitate the generosity and grace of the Father we see in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. As one person wrote me about giving, "It isn't a matter of the wallet, but the heart."

Phil

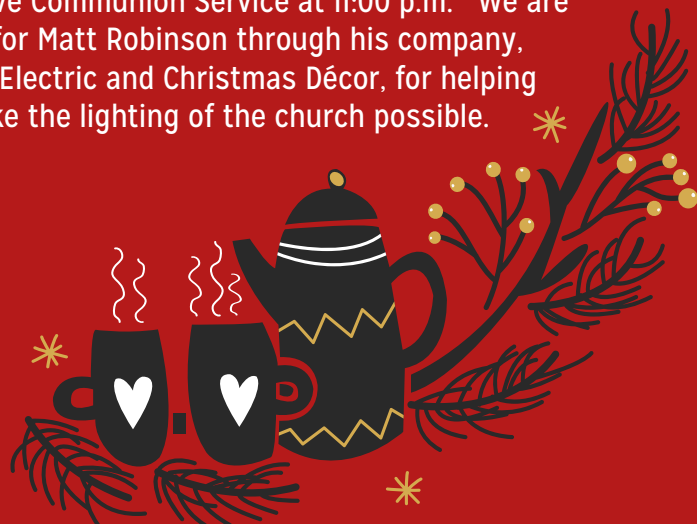


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH *Engaging Downtown and Being Neighbors*

One of our church's goals for 2018-2019 is engaging downtown. We have so many opportunities for ministry and being a neighbor in the heart of our city. One way we will connect with downtown will be through the 30th Anniversary of City Sidewalks as a major sponsor. We are grateful to have the opportunity and resources to help fund the downtown Christmas décor and celebrate with the community the birth of our Lord.

On Tuesday, November 27, we will serve hot chocolate at our booth on the south-side of the Convention Center before the downtown parade. Come by and see us or take a turn serving some Christmas cheer. On Wednesday, November 28, downtown will host choirs from throughout the city. Our assigned place is in front of The Grace where our Sanctuary, children's, and youth choirs will be singing. You don't have to be a choir member to sing Christmas favorites, so come join us. Then, at 6:30 p.m. all the participating choirs from their location will join together in singing, "Joy to the World" to set a world's record for the largest choir.

On Tuesday, the night of the parade, we will also light the church, which has been decorated extensively for the 30th Anniversary of City Sidewalks and the 50th Anniversary of our Candlelight Christmas Eve Communion Service at 11:00 p.m. We are grateful for Matt Robinson through his company, Lone Star Electric and Christmas Décor, for helping to make the lighting of the church possible.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

For over ten years now, as a church, we have participated in Operation Christmas Child. Operation Christmas Child, or OCC, is led by Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham and has as its purpose the desire to give children across the world a Christmas present along with a Gospel tract. Literally millions of shoeboxes have been filled and delivered over the past years.

First Baptist Church will continue as the central drop off. Being the central drop off means that we will not only collect our own boxes, but we will collect boxes for all the towns within about 100 miles like Snyder, Coleman, Sweetwater, and Albany just to name a few.

The week of November 12-19 is known as collection week in OCC terminology. Here at First Baptist it means we will have our collection center open every day during that time frame.

The hours vary some, but each day we will have someone here to collect the shoeboxes that come in. After the boxes come in, they will all be put into larger shipping cartons and then finally loaded on to a semi-trailer to be shipped to the sorting center in Dallas.

Once again this year, we will need people to volunteer at University Place, greet and collect shoeboxes from folks in our community who want to participate, people to help crate up all of the collected shoeboxes and prepare them for shipping, and finally people (anyone able to lift 80 lb. cartons) to help load all of the crates into the trailer for final shipping.

Of course, we are going to participate in the actual filling of shoeboxes and in fact we already have some of the OCC shoeboxes available for you to take. Look on the OCC table located just outside of the Library for supplies and for sign-up sheets for hours you might could come and volunteer to work the collection center.

Hopefully this year will be a record year for us as a church in the number of boxes that we fill, but I know it will be a great year as we have the opportunity to serve as the collection center. If you have other questions about OCC and your involvement, let Debra or Mike know and we will gladly fill you in on how you can help. You can call or email either of us at: 325-675-8116 or debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org or mike.greenfield@fbcabilene.org.



STAFF UPDATES

The church is glad to have Melinda Norris join the staff as the Ministry Assistant for Missions. Melinda brings a wealth of experience in customer relations and a go get 'em attitude. She is no stranger to First Baptist, her parents are Glenn and Nancy Tallant. So next time you are in the offices, drop by and say hello to our newest employee.

Continue to pray for both the Pastor for Students and Pastor for Senior Adult search committees as they continue their work. Both committees are hard at work and would value your support.

City Light Community Ministries Annual (*Day Before*) Thanksgiving Breakfast Wednesday, November 21 at 9 a.m. City Light Dining Room

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, can you believe it? Once again, we are going to ask people to help us celebrate by coming to City Light with your gifts, time, and resources to this wonderful event. Can you help set up and decorate the tables; cook and serve; greet people, help with the music, clean up or just work behind the scene? Could you come and visit with our CL folks and families, bring a breakfast casserole, or provide some fruit or juice? Then this is the perfect place for you to come and volunteer in any of those areas.

We would like to offer this opportunity to you to be the presence of Christ at City Light. Call the office at 325-673-6686 or email at maura.delacruz@fbcabilene.org. Can't wait to hear from you!



STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS

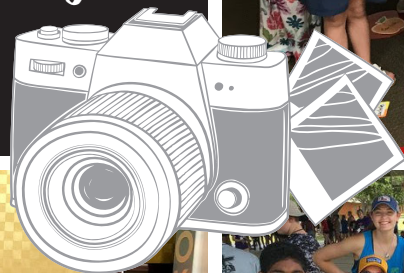
Each year in the fall, we take some time to be reminded of our role in the stewardship of the church. This reminder is not just about our financial resources, but obviously it is a major component of stewardship. This month in worship, we will see a video, hear a testimony and be challenged to return a Ministry Covenant Card, which has as a part of the card your estimated giving for 2019.

Next week, each family in the church will receive a letter about the 2019 Budget and a Ministry Covenant Card. We are asking each family to take time to pray about their involvement in the stewardship of the church and then fill out the card. Then on Sunday, November 18, during the morning worship service an opportunity to return the cards will be a part of worship that morning.

2019 Ministry Covenant Card	With God's help this next year, I will strive to support the Kingdom work done through the ministries of First Baptist Church. I will take serious God's call for firstfruits giving and estimate my 2019 giving to be: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Estimate <input type="checkbox"/> Family Estimate	Cut and put in a place where you will be reminded to pray for the work of the church on a daily basis and your firstfruits giving covenant.
	\$ _____ per _____ (estimated amount) (week, month, year)	
	I will also pledge to serve in at least one specific missional activity of the church: Activity: _____	Inspiring Hope in the Heart of the City
	Name: _____	
	Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____	



We are thankful for what God has allowed us to do this year, here are just a few...



FBC UNIFIED MISSIONS OFFERING 2018

Changing the world one community at a time.

Seven Mission Offerings Combined into One

GOAL: \$80,000 - YEAR TO DATE: \$46,367

Please continue to 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.

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%

Our church will provide the love of Christ in real ways to children, women, and men through:

- Life-saving medical care and ministry in hard to reach places
- Food and shelter for people living in poverty
- Education for forgotten children
- Loving compassion and community for marginalized people
- Care and support for widows and orphans.

Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions - 15%

Designed by Women's Missionary Union of Texas, this offering provides funding for the Texas Baptists' missionaries including: language ministries, work with international students, camp scholarships, African-American ministries, church ministries, bi-vocational/smaller church ministries, and associational missions.

Community Transformation - 12%

Provides resources for responding to specific ministry opportunities and needs right here in Abilene. These resources help to transform families, neighborhoods, and ministry partners within the Big Country.

Baptist World Aid - 9%

The compassionate arm of the Baptist World Alliance provides help for persons in need globally through disaster relief, alleviation of hunger, medical assistance to those affected by HIV/AIDS, and community development.

BGCT World Hunger - 9%

Supports projects across the world which feed the hungry and help the hungry help themselves in the context of holistic Christian ministry.

BGCT Disaster Relief - 3%

Serves as an information network working directly with Baptist churches and associations to assess needs, disburse resources for those affected by disaster and facilitate connections with Baptist partners.

Lawrence Trott Offering for Associational Missions - 2%

Provides support for the Abilene Baptist Association including: Hope Camp for at-risk teens, Social Ministries - food and clothing for the needy, Hospitality House - lodging for families of incarcerated loved ones, strengthening churches, Big Country Baptist Assembly, and Christian Women's Job Corps.

STAY *connected*



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STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

November 22, 25 years

Marilyn Henderson

GLO Ministry Assistant

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

October 2018

Budget	September	Year-to-Date
Required	\$273,990	\$2,610,803
Given	\$233,245	\$2,848,000

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

EVENT CALENDAR:

NOVEMBER

- 1-3 Pictorial Directory Pictures
- 2-4 The Gap Retreat
- 4 Personnel Committee
- 5-10 Pictorial Directory Pictures
- 7 GLO Board Meeting
- 8 GLO Thanksgiving Lunch
- 11 Missions Committee
- 12-19 Operation Christmas Child Collection Week
- 13 Rockin' Moms
- 14 Buildings & Grounds Committee
- 15 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 18 Children's Mission Fund Raiser
Annual Thanksgiving Dinner
- 20 Finance Committee
- 21 City Light Thanksgiving Breakfast
No Wednesday Meal/Activities
- 22-23 Church Offices Closed
- 27 City Sidewalks
Hot Chocolate Booth
at Convention Center
- 28 City Sidewalks
Caroling at the Grace
- 26-30 CBF Art Show



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