

FIRSTwords

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

GIVE HOPE COMMITMENT SUNDAY NOVEMBER 24

Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it. -Helen Keller

Never ever, ever lose hope.


Sunday, November 24, will be an exciting and historic day in the life of FBC. It will be a day filled with thanksgiving and gratitude to God for all of His provisions and for His Kingdom's work. The congregation will return their GIVE HOPE Commitment Cards on this special Sunday for God's vision for our city. Remember, your pledge to GIVE HOPE is a three-year commitment. Every member should have received an information packet either at a home meeting or by mail. This packet included your commitment card. Some in our church family will have turned in their GIVE HOPE cards earlier on November 10 as a sign of their support and encouragement to the congregation. You may return the GIVE HOPE Commitment Cards in Sunday school or during the offering in morning worship. This will be a great day of celebration as we take the next step in God's mission to GIVE HOPE FOR CHILDREN...FOR FAMILIES...AND FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

Sunday, November 24 will also be the opportunity to return your Ministry Budget Covenant Card during Sunday school or during the morning offering. The Ministry Budget Covenant Cards will be mailed the week of November 4 to each family. The Ministry Budget serves as our strategic plan to fulfill our mission statement during the year of "Reaching people for Jesus Christ and together becoming more like Him." We hope you have prayed about supporting both GIVE HOPE and the 2020 Ministry Budget.

However, perhaps you are only able to do one of them. In that case, we ask that your priority be to the Ministry Budget which provides for the ongoing ministries that touch thousands of lives weekly.

Sunday evening, November 24, we will hear the first report on the total amount pledged to GIVE HOPE during our Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. You will be receiving an invitation to the dinner and can return the enclosed card or call the church office to make your reservations. The initial report will be a great encouragement of what God has done in our lives as we give Him the honor and glory. We anticipate that others, both in our church and the community, will continue to join us in reaching our goal.

Never doubt that a small group of generous and committed people can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. -Margaret Mead (paraphrased)



GIVE HOPE
FOR OUR CHILDREN
FOR OUR FAMILIES
FOR OUR COMMUNITY

MY COMMITMENT TO GIVE HOPE

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

I/We prayerfully commit to step out in faith and pledge the following amount above regular tithes and offerings.

Total Three-Year Pledge Amount \$ _____

I/We plan to give accordingly:

\$ _____ Weekly for 156 weeks (3 years)	\$ _____ Annually for 3 years
\$ _____ Monthly for 36 months (3 years)	\$ _____ Other

I/We wish to commit to the Give Hope campaign by means of a gift other than cash.

Description and Approximate Value: \$ _____

I/We are unable to make a financial commitment at this time but, I commit to pray that God will guide our church as we seek to implement the Give Hope Project.

Signature (optional): _____



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

In reading Richard Sterns' book, *"The Hole in Our Gospel,"* I have been challenged just by the quotes that are treasures at the beginning of each chapter. Here is one by Saint Teresa of Avila who lived in Spain during the 1500's.

*Christ has no body of earth but yours,
no hands but yours
no feet but yours
Yours are the eyes through which
Christ's compassion for the world is to look out;
yours are the feet with which
He is to go about doing good;*

Some have wondered why we are taking the risk and the expense of expanding City Light, GLO Daycare, and the Ministry of Counseling. The words of Saint Teresa give a compelling voice to answering "Why?" Jesus came to bring the "Kingdom of God" on earth. (Mark 1:15) This was His main message and mission. The Kingdom of God, God's rule and reign in our lives calls us to change and challenge everything in our fallen world in the here and now. Sterns writes about our Kingdom mission: "...we are also commanded to go into the world---to bear fruit by lifting up the poor and the marginalized, challenging injustice wherever we find it, rejecting the worldly values found within every culture, and loving our neighbors as ourselves."

Why are we taking this bold missional step to transform our city? We believe God has guided us to this great opportunity to *make earth a little more like heaven.* Opportunities to be a part of such an adventure only come along a few times in our lives. We are at this tremendous threshold because the congregation voted by over 95% to purchase the First Christian property and raise \$6 million to renovate it into a center of hope for City Light, GLO, and the Ministry of Counseling. The train

has left the station, and I hope you are on it.

Certainly, this a God-sized challenge. When you have some goal you think you can do on our own, it usually isn't from God - just read the many faith stories in the Bible. Take to heart in the words of John Gardner who said, *"We are continually faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems."* Several years ago when the church faced the challenge of building the Family Life Center, some feared it could not sustain itself once built. Yet, today, the ministry programs flourish and the FLC relies less on the church than it has in years past. How God provides. Some may not realize City Light was originally a spinoff of the FLC. We can only imagine what God will do thirty-years from now through this mission project and the miraculous ways He will provide.

Take a moment and consider all of the reasons we have come to this sovereign moment to help bring God's Kingdom. As one person has asked, "What do you think God does not like about this?"

Last week, I was at the *Prayer Summit* sponsored by a group of churches called *One Kingdom*. It is a diverse group which includes Catholics and charismatics. We have one thing in common - we love this city in the name of Jesus Christ. We called out in unity for the power of Jesus to break every chain in our city. As we prayed for the 20% of our city who struggle below the poverty line, I said to myself, *"God has given us a great opportunity to turn prayers into action and empower people to move out of poverty through the ministries of City Light."* Then, as we prayed for the broken families, I said to myself, *"Lord you have given us a way to bring healing and life to this prayer through the Ministry of Counseling and GLO - thank you Lord for giving us your mission of healing as we invite others to join us in your vision. Thank you Lord, you gave this mission as a blessing and not a burden."*

(Continued from page 2)

I close with two other quotes. One is from Richard Stearns book and the other from the song, *God of This City*,

Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world. Joel Barker

*You're the light in the darkness.
You're the hope to the hopeless.
You're the peace to the restless.
You are.*

*There is no one like our God.
For greater things have yet to come
and greater things are still to be done in this city.*

Come join together in this Kingdom journey of hope which will not only transform our city, it will change your life as a follower of Jesus.

Phil

TOUR OF HOPE CENTER

Sunday, November 10

Following morning worship until 12:45 p.m. On Sunday, November 10, following the morning worship service, the Hope Center property will be open for you to "take a tour" of the present facilities. Some have asked to be able to see what the property looks like and begin to dream about what might be as we move forward with the Give Hope project. Some of the Give Hope Building Team and staff members will be on-site to help guide you around the property.



2019 CHRISTMAS STORE

Our church has the opportunity to provide Christmas assistance to families who would prefer to provide for themselves at Christmas rather than receive presents from a stranger or stand in the line for a giveaway, but are unable to do so.

We want to encourage families at Martinez Elementary, GLO Daycare, and City Light this holiday season with our City Light Christmas Store! The store will be open by appointment only on December 4, 5 and 6 and then again December 11, 12 and 13. Donated toys will be priced at 10 to 15 percent of the retail price. The store will only have toy type items, we will not have clothing.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Purchase a toy or toys and drop them off at the church office before noon Friday, November 29 or donate money and we will be happy to purchase the toy on your behalf tax free. If you donate money, please mark your donation as "Christmas Store" and place in the offering plate on Sunday, or mail/bring it to the church offices.
2. Volunteer your time. We will need volunteers to help bring refreshments or help with guests on the days the store is open.

For more information, please contact Melinda Norris at 325-675-8112 or melinda.norris@fbcabilene.org.



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 18-25 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.



Friday, February 7, at 7 pm | First Baptist Church Abilene

General admission and church member discount tickets are available in the church office.

Artist Circle, Group, and Senior Adult tickets are available online at premierproductionstickets.com.



CHRISMON DECORATING

Sunday, November 17

5:00 p.m. • Dining Room

I can't believe we are already talking about Christmas, but it will be here before we know it! With that said, we need to start thinking about the decorations for our new trees we have purchased for the sanctuary.

With new trees, we would like to have fresh Chrismons to hang on them.

For the past several years, we have had a wonderful tradition of coming together and making Chrismons on a Sunday evening in the dining room. This has become a time many of us look forward to, even those of us that are not super crafty!

Our children hang the Chrismons on the trees the first Sunday of Advent, so we will need to have our new ones made a couple of weeks prior. We will have our decorating party on Sunday, November 17 at 5 p.m. in the dining room. All supplies needed will be provided, so all you need to do is show up and be ready to glue some glitter!

This is a great tradition and we hope you and your family will join us for this special event.

Messengers needed!

Are you interested in being a messenger to the Baptist General Convention of Texas?

**The annual convention is
November 17-19 in Waco, TX**

If you are interested, please contact:
Suzanne Shaw - 673-5031



Women's Ministry Opportunities

Intentional – *done with intention or on purpose*. Do you have friends who do not know Christ, or do you come across people who just look like they need to hear a kind or encouraging word? How often do we intentionally seek opportunities to show God's love by encouraging someone or just saying something kind? This year, our Women's Ministry wants to help and encourage each of us to begin looking for those opportunities or actually seeking out opportunities to share the love of God.

We have planned a Women's Fellowship this fall, November 5, and three events scheduled for the spring semester to help us with this endeavor. The winter and spring fellowships are planned for January 7 and April 28.

Kate Henderson and Rebecca Bradford will be helping us as we seek to Abound in God's love at our annual Women's Retreat, February 7 & 8, 2020. This will be a wonderful time to refocus, as well as get to know or continue to grow relationships with other women in our church. Our retreat will once again be held at the McM Elegante and you will have the option of staying overnight or choosing to come and go.

Registration for the retreat will begin November 3, with an Early-Bird Discount of \$10 throughout November. Registration will continue through January 30. Forms for registration will be available on the 3rd Floor, the Welcome Center, and in front of the Music Suite, each Sunday and Wednesday. Online registration is also available. Rates will vary as to what option you choose for the retreat. We hope you will choose to come to one, or hopefully all these events, and you will be inspired to look for opportunities to share God's love with others.

ACTING IN *Love*

THAILAND MISSION TRIP

by Kelly Messer

I had not been on a mission trip since college, and my idea of mission trip work was certainly stretched and expanded. We were not hammering or building structures, but were building goodwill and relationships.

Our trip consisted of three parts with a different focus in each place. First, we met Hunter and Mary in Bangkok. Getting to know them was one of the best parts of this trip! With Hunter and Mary, we visited the Klung Thoey neighborhood and went to a preschool affiliated with the Church of Christ of Thailand (CCT)--an association of protestant churches. We met with Ajaan Tewin, from the Social Development Services of the CCT and Khruu Dao--the amazing school principal who has taught children, cooked, mentored families, and has lived at the school for over 40 years! This woman is a truly amazing servant. We had the opportunity to see the precious, well-behaved, engaged preschoolers at work in their Montessori curriculum classrooms. We also had the opportunity to tour a street (what we would call an alley) in the neighborhood. Klung Thoey is a very poor slum area of about 70,000 people. The word "klung" actually means "canal." This neighborhood is essentially built over a swamp. Many of the canals are paved now, but the area still floods. Khruu Dao and the CCT schools are beacons of light for the Klung Thoey neighborhood. In addition to the preschool program, the facility provides after-school athletic programs for older kids and helps parents through a handicraft program. At the conclusion of the visit, we got to shop for a few souvenirs in the little store which is stocked with some of the parents' craft work.

The second part of our trip was to the island of Phuket to meet good friends of Hunter and Mary, Jay and Buu. They are a Christian couple who have 10 foster kids and are also building relationships with their Muslim neighbors. When we went to meet them at their house, since there were 10 of us, each child was told to choose one of us

to be their "buddy." They were instructed to help their "buddy" know what to do when we all went to the Seoul Grill Restaurant, complete with a conveyor belt of food offerings to grill yourself--think Asian raclette! These kids were always so sweet to greet us in their home when we gathered there for Bible study and fellowship time (silly games). We learned their names, and they learned ours. They have all made professions of faith, and some even shared their testimony with us. So, pray for these 10 children and others there. We were blessed to get to know them.

While in Phuket, we went by speedboat to the island of Ko Yao Noi. This is an almost 100% Muslim island where Jay and Buu have been visiting and making friends. When we arrived, we had no idea what we would be doing or where we would be going. We first stopped so that Buu could visit a friend. It was very hot, so of course we had to stop by the cute little coffee shop, owned by Buu's other friend, for iced latte's and Italian sodas. We toured rice fields adjacent to a home stay that is being built by a friend of Buu and Jay. Of course, then we had to stop and shop at a craft shop where women were hand-painting Batik sarongs, because if we hadn't stopped it might have offended Buu's friend who was in business there. For lunch we were obliged to visit another one of Buu's friends who owned a restaurant. It was really only a kitchen attached to a covered patio, but they served the best fresh Thai seafood I've ever tasted--all ingredients sourced from the island! Do you detect a trend here--yes! We did not know where we were going next, but with every stop to visit a friend of Buu's, the day grew more spectacular and wonderful. Across the street from the restaurant we took a long-tail boat a short distance to the fish farm which provided fish for the restaurant. The caretaker of the fish farm was a charming and enthusiastic young guy who enjoyed showing us his fish. He fed them and even picked some of the fish up for us to hold.

The most meaningful part of the day was our last stop, to a friend of Buu and Jay who had a new tin roof on their home funded by some of their connections. We took off our shoes and climbed the ladder into this wooden, one-room home on stilts. I thought we were only there to see the roof. We sat down and were introduced to Buu's friends. One of the women is apparently recovering from cancer. The women in our group were allowed to gather around her, place our hands on her and pray for her. It was very special to be able to do this. I'll never forget praying for this woman as the rain softly fell on the tin roof. Although they are Muslim, they know Jesus as the prophet who heals. This is how Jay and Buu are ministering to their Muslim friends on this island.

The next day, we traveled to the Phang Nga province on the mainland, just north of Phuket, to help teach English. One day we were at a senior citizens' center, and the next day at a school. Both were fun experiences. Hunter and Jay actually taught the classes, and we practiced the lessons in smaller groups. The senior citizens learned phrases which would be helpful to them as they interact with English speakers in the tourism industry. By the end of the morning, some pupils still answered the question, "Where is the restroom?" with, "I would like to buy a mango." But, even if some things were lost in translation, the classes actually went very well. Everyone loved Hunter; he is such a people person and entertaining teacher. The seniors didn't speak much English, but they tried their best. We all had fun. The main goal was for Jay to build relationships with the local officials and respected senior citizens in the community. After class, we had the opportunity to see the lot where Jay and Buu plan to build a home which will be big enough to house their children. It is important for them to build goodwill in the Phang Nga community where they plan to call home.

The final part of our trip was in Cambodia with Lauren and David Bass. They have been learning the Cambodian language and culture over the last four years. We arrived during the weekend of Ancestor's Day, when many residents of Phnom Penh are visiting relatives in the country. This holiday is the equivalent of Thanksgiving in Cambodia, and the city was unusually quiet. We attended church with David and Lauren. Becky, Britney, and John helped the children braid bracelets before the service, and we were able to meet the small congregation. The sermon was on Ephesians 2:8-9, and even if we didn't understand the language, we felt a kinship to these

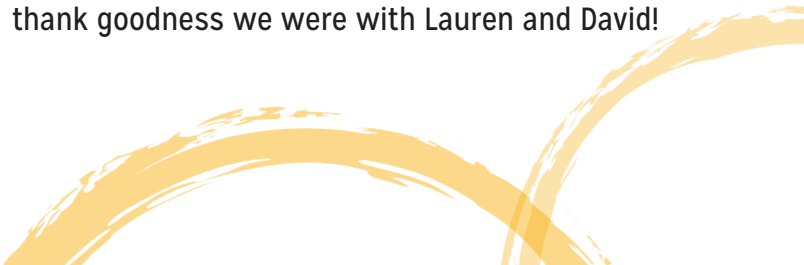
people, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

David gave us a crash course on Khmer history and culture. We visited the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum and learned about the unspeakable brutality of the Khmer Rouge. Toul Sleng was a high school converted to a security prison from 1975-79. There were 67 such security prisons and 347 killing fields in operation during that time. Ironically, one of the most famous killing fields is located not far from the church we attended. Cambodians still struggle with this dark past, and the Basses are learning how to respond to such residual trauma.

Lauren and David tag teamed with us so one of them could be at home with baby Chloe. A few times, when it wasn't nap time, all three Basses met us for a meal. It was always fun to get to see Chloe! We went to the Basses' apartment for a very meaningful time of reflection about the trip and prayer for each other, our church, and our families. Mary gave a devotional, and we also took the Lord's Supper together just as we had with Jay and the kids in Phuket. The morning our group spent together with Hunter and Mary and the Basses was such a precious time.

This trip made me all the more thankful for what we have in Christ. We saw many "spirit houses" placed in the front yard of homes and businesses. Their purpose is to house and appease the spirits so they will leave people alone, but we have His security and protection. Also, we do not have to make merit at a temple in order to get to heaven. Our salvation is already paid in full and assured.

In closing, I'll share a few interesting tidbits about Thailand and Cambodia. Both Dairy Queen and KFC are alive and well in Southeast Asia. We wondered if they sing, "DQ, that's what I like about Bangkok!" (Nancy and my Mom did, and you can catch it on Facebook!) If you lack any convenience while in a Southeast Asian city, there is probably a 7-Eleven within 500 feet of wherever you are. We taught the English names of fruit that we didn't actually know before the trip--mangosteen, longan, durian, dragon fruit, and rambutan. Finally, crossing the street in Phnom Penh is an acquired skill--thank goodness we were with Lauren and David!



EVENT CALENDAR:

NOVEMBER

- 3 Personnel Committee
A Downhome Christmas Rehearsal
- 5 Women's Fellowship
- 6 Give Hope Prayer Team
GLO Board
- 7 Healing Hearts Meeting
ACU Choir Fall Concert
- 8-10 College & Career Retreat
- 10 K-5 Choir Sing in morning worship
A Downhome Christmas Rehearsal
- 12 Rockin' Moms
- 13 Buildings & Grounds Committee
- 14 GLO Thanksgiving Lunch
- 15 Women's Coffee Fellowship
CLCM Culinary Graduation
- 15-16 M. S. Retreat
- 17 RA/GA Mission Fund Raiser
Missions Committee
Chrismon Making Party
- 18-25 Operation Christmas Child Collection Week
- 19 Finance Committee
Deacons' Meeting
- 21 Healing Hearts Meeting
A Downhome Christmas Rehearsal
- 24 Annual Thanksgiving Dinner
- 27 No Wednesday Activities
- 28-29 Church Offices Closed

GRANT-IN-AID APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Applications are available in the church office, or in The College and Career Sunday school room. Deadline to turn in completed forms is Monday, December 2.

*The committee will meet on
Wednesday, December 11.*

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

November 5, 1 year
David Curry

M. A. to Church Accountant

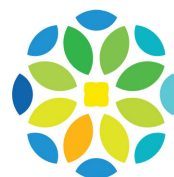
November 22, 26 years
Marilyn Henderson
GLO M. A.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

October 2019

<u>Budget</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Required	\$273,058	\$2,712,295
Given	\$192,975	\$2,613,824

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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