

FIRSTwords

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

YOUTH UPDATE

By Austen Winfrey

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOU!



As we celebrate Thanksgiving later this month, I wanted to write a short message of gratitude to our students, parents, and church family here at FBC Abilene.

TO THE PARENTS AND VOLUNTEERS: I am thankful to you for the friendship you have shown Holly and me for the last 2 years since we have been a part of this church. Your flexibility and grace towards the youth ministry schedule makes me especially grateful during two very "different than usual" years. Our volunteers have worked hard during this time and I am extremely grateful for your service to our students.

TO OUR CHURCH: I am beyond thankful and blessed to be a part of such a great church. The support you give our youth ministry is incredible and I'm thankful to serve at a place that truly values the voices, well-being, and Christian journeys of middle school and high school students. Thank you for walking alongside us as we journey with our Lord together.

TO OUR STUDENTS: My writing ability won't be able to convey this accurately, but it's important to write it out anyway. I am especially thankful for you. We have had two weird years to deal with and yet I am very emboldened on the state of our youth ministry. That is all because of you. Thank you for your faithfulness and for the joy that radiates off of y'all. You encourage me every day to be a better follower of Christ. Let us continue to learn together from Jesus, promote joy within our friendships, and love our neighbors with the love of God.



MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

November 1, 2021

Thank you, First Baptist Church, for the encouraging words and prayerful support you are showing to the Pastor Search Committee! We are inspired by your participation in *Prayer@First* during the month of October, as we are praying for Phil and Mary, for our church body, and for the Pastor Search Committee in these days of transition.

First Congregational Conversation on November 7

We also feel a genuine sense of excitement about our upcoming First Congregational Conversation on November 7. On that day, we will have a church-wide hamburger meal together at 4:45 p.m. in the Family Life Center gym, and then all adults and youth will gather around tables at 5:30 p.m. for a church-wide conversation. Pre-school children will be cared for in the main church's nursery area. They can be dropped off as early as 4:45 p.m., but be sure they eat before coming. Children in Kindergarten through the sixth grade may join their parents for the hamburger meal at 4:45 p.m.; then they will be cared for in designated areas of the Family Life Center, while their parents go to the gym for our conversation.

During the Congregational Conversation we will be talking about our Values as a church – what we see as the most treasured qualities of First Baptist. The Pastor Search Committee is eager to hear from everyone about what matters most to you about First Baptist.

In order to prepare adequately, we need everyone to provide an RSVP for November 7, with the meal at 4:45 p.m. and the First Congregational Conversation starting at 5:30 p.m. in the FLC.

- You may sign up by clicking here: [RSVP for Congregational Conversation](#).
- You may also sign up in your Sunday school class or by contacting the church office at (325) 675-8116 or emailing debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org.

Two More Congregational Conversations

To look ahead, the Pastor Search Committee will be hosting two additional Congregational Conversations in the new year. In January, the conversation will center on what we Focus on, or what we should Focus on, as a church. In the third Congregational Conversation, which will come in February, we will talk about the Trajectory of our church – where we are going in the future.

The information we gain from all three Congregational Conversations will be incorporated into our Church Profile, a description of our identity and aspirations. The Church Profile will then be the basis for developing a Senior Pastor Profile, which will outline the skills and gifts we will be looking for in our next pastor. As you can see, it is very important that we hear from each of you in all of three conversations, because we want to know your thoughts about who our church is, where we are going, and what kind of leadership we need in the future.

Thanksgiving

In this season of Thanksgiving, we have so much for which to be grateful. Within our congregation, we sense the loving presence of the Spirit of God who inspires our worship and empowers us for faithful service. The very gifted ministers of our church staff lead us to grow in faith and serve the Lord. We who are the laity of the church continue to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community. This is not a day of stagnation, but a time for prayerful reflection and fresh openness to the moving of the Holy Spirit among us.

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On Wednesday evenings, we have a *Prayer@First* time at 6:00 p.m. in room 164. In a recent prayer meeting, while we were talking about where we sense our church is these days, one person in our group said, “I feel a real excitement right now, like this is a time of renewal.”

We may have entered this liminal space of pastoral transition with some feelings of uncertainty, perhaps even anxiety. Yet we are discovering that God, who is forever faithful and always moving, is certainly in our midst, guiding us into the uncharted opportunities ahead that we cannot now see, but will certainly become adventures of faith which are greater than our imaginations.

With hope and joy for the journey ahead, we look forward to seeing you for our Congregational Conversation on November 7.

The Pastor Search Committee

Jecilly Varghese, Marcus Spencer, Jim Jones, Paul Irby, Evan Harris,
Tiffany Hammer, Libby Gibson, Bob Ellis, and Debby Brown

CITY LIGHT CHRISTMAS STORE 2021

Once again, our church has the opportunity to provide Christmas assistance to families who would prefer to help provide for themselves at Christmas rather than receive presents from a stranger or stand in the line for a giveaway, but they 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 7, 8 and 9 and then again December 14, 15 and 16. Donated toys will be priced at 10 to 15 percent of the retail price. It is a great joy to be able to help these families! If you know a family who could benefit from the store, please contact Melinda at the church office.



HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Purchase a toy or toys and drop them off at the church office by Monday, December 6 or donate money and we will be happy to purchase the toys tax free on your behalf. If you donate money, please mark your donation as “Christmas Store.” Also, you can use the Amazon link below. The items will ship to the church from Amazon.
2. Volunteer your time. We will need a few volunteers to help set-up toys and help each day while the family shops. If you would like to help, contact Melinda in the Missions’ Office at 325-675-8112 or melinda.norris@fbcabilene.org.

Amazon.com Christmas Store Link

The Amazon link is just a suggestion of toys we would like, but of course you are welcome to purchase what you would like to give. It may ask you to choose a shipping address.

If so, the address is **First Baptist Church, Melinda Norris, 1333 N. 3rd, Abilene, Texas 79601**

Thank you all for making this blessing happen for so many!

UNIFIED MISSIONS OFFERING 2021

We can change the world one community at a time!

SEVEN MISSION OFFERINGS COMBINED INTO ONE

WE HAVE MET \$27,493 OF OUR 2021 GOAL OF \$75,000

**CBF • BGCT WORLD HUNGER • COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION • BAPTIST WORLD AID
MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING FOR TEXAS MISSIONS • BGCT DISASTER RELIEF
LAWRENCE TROTT OFFERING FOR ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS**

MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING FOR TEXAS MISSIONS:

First Thessalonians 3:12a (CEV) says, *"May the Lord make your love for each other and for everyone else grow by leaps and bounds." God will make our love for each other and for everyone else grow by leaps and bounds if we let Him.*



God's love knows no bounds, and the promises found in these scriptures extends to the people of Texas. Who will show that love? We can, and when we do, that love will grow by leaps and bounds.

When you give to the Unified Missions Offering at FBC Abilene, a portion of your gift goes to this Mary Hill Davis offering for Texas Missions:

- You bring hope to a battered woman and her family
- You provide medicine for a sick child at a free daily clinic
- A community has clean drinking water for the first time because of your involvement
- A child's life is changed because your generosity enables her to go to summer camp.

Understanding that missions is what believers do together to reach beyond the needs of their congregations to witness and minister for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission, WMU of Texas designed the Mary Hill Davis Offering to advance Texas Baptist missionary efforts to help people come to know Christ. Therefore, it is the goal of WMU of Texas to strengthen and support Texas missions' opportunities through the Baptist General Convention of Texas. This offering makes it possible for mission ventures to be sustainable until they are appropriately integrated into other financial channels.

TEXAS BAPTIST (BGCT) DISASTER RELIEF:

When you give to the Unified Missions Offering of our church, a portion goes to the Texas Baptist (BGCT) Disaster Relief Offering. Hearts are moved when disaster strikes a community. Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, and other types of disasters can suddenly change the lifestyle of a family, community, or country. Churches and civic organizations desire to get involved. When you give to this offering, here is where your money is used:

- Meeting emergency financial needs
- Provide gift cards to grocery stores or big box stores operating in affected areas, so the family can go and purchase new clothes, baby diapers, underwear, socks, and food on their own
- Paper products: paper towels, toilet paper, paper plates, napkins, plastic cups, and utensils
- Cleaning supplies: mops, buckets, bleach, cleaning solutions, plastic gloves, shovels, and rakes
- Used furniture and appliances needed in the long-term recovery period of the disaster.

The Texas Baptist Disaster Relief is dedicated to helping communities rebuild after disasters. They work with disaster survivors throughout the long-term restoration process by partnering with local churches, associations, and other long-term recovery teams. The BGCT mobilizes volunteers to gather and transport donated items and funds, provide prayer and spiritual support, and raise awareness. Texas Baptist Men have had many opportunities to help with recent storms/disasters in our surrounding area.

Our gifts and prayers make it possible for us to help spread the Gospel and meet physical needs in our own state of Texas, our country, and around the world.

Isaiah 58:12 says: Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. (NRSV)



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



WOW! What a great church! Your response to the Allen Family and the Friendship House Pounding was amazing! Thank you for helping this ministry and this family! They are so grateful and appreciate all of you!

If you have questions or want to learn more about the Friendship House, let us know by contacting the church office at 325-675-8112.

CITY LIGHT COMMUNITY MINISTRIES *Annual (Day Before)* **THANKSGIVING BREAKFAST**

Come help us celebrate and take this opportunity to be the presence of Christ!

**Wednesday, November 24 at 9:00 a.m.
in the City Light Dining Room**

There are several ways to help!

- Bring a breakfast casserole to City Light the morning of the breakfast
- Provide Fruit or juice
- Help cook/heat up the casseroles
- Help serve and greet
- Decorate tables
- Come visit with our City Light folks!

To sign up to help, please contact Maura at 325-673-6866 maura.delacruz@fbcabilene.org.

Thank you!



**Cooperative
Baptist
Fellowship**

Jeff and Alicia Lee serve in Macedonia and FBC partners with them in this ministry. They help in multiple ministries in their community of Skopje. See the note below from Alicia Lee.

Around the one-year mark of COVID-19, a church leader reached out to me to see if I'd be willing to help their congregation process their COVID-19 experience and help them learn more about stress, anxiety, and healthy coping. I feel really strongly that the church has an opportunity to help reduce the stigma of mental health care, so I jumped at the opportunity.

We had a great group of young adults and young families, each of whom had been impacted by COVID-19. It was incredible to hear them share how God felt near to them during their difficult experiences.

Alicia Lee, CBF field personnel in Skopje, Macedonia

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 15-22 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, however due to COVID-19, this will be done differently. Using new protocols established by Christmas Child leadership, volunteers will still be needed to greet and collect shoeboxes from folks in our community who want to participate, help crate up all of the collected shoeboxes and prepare them for shipping, and finally 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 in the Welcome Center 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.



THANK YOU

for your response to the City Light request for plastic bags and bottled water! We even received a pallet of water (90 cases)!!!

*We can always
count on you!*



SHARE THE WARMTH

City Light needs clean used jackets to share with our homeless friends and neighbors during the cold weather. If you have items you can donate, please bring them to City Light or call 325-673-6686 or 325-675-8112.

Thank you!

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

November 5, 3 years
David Curry
Ministry Assistant for Finance

November 22, 28 years
Marilyn Henderson
GLO Ministry Assistant

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

October 2021

Budget	September	Year-to-Date
Required	\$224,000	\$2,705,040
Given	\$190,492	\$2,318,115

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

November

2	ACU Fall Concert
7	Congregational Conversation
9	CLCM Board Meeting
10	Buildings & Grounds Committee
14	Thanksgiving Potluck @ Friendship House
	Personnel Committee
15-22	Operation Christmas Child Collection Week
16	Finance Committee
	Deacons' Meeting
21	Family Thanksgiving Dinner
24	No Meal/Activities
25 & 26	Church Offices Closed
28	Lighting of Church



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CHURCH • ABILENE

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