

# FIRSTwords

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

## NOVEMBER UPDATE FROM THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Everything we do as a church involves a partnership of the human and the divine. In every decision and action, we attempt to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world, doing our part to fulfill what we pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." Our efforts are always acts of faith, whereby we seek to understand God's will and then do the best we can to serve Christ.

The Pastor Search Committee has spent over a year attempting to do that very thing: seeking a new senior pastor for our church in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. At every turn, we have found that God has been faithful to help us take the next step to the best of our ability. And, each step has been an act of faith on our part. We do not yet know where we will wind up, but we are confident God will continue to show us the path.

We have come a long way from our initial gathering as a committee in late July 2021. Because of our work together, we have in hand an extensive congregational profile, which is a compilation of the ideas you expressed through our church-wide conversations and surveys, and we have a profile for our next pastor, which outlines the kind of gifts we are seeking in our next leader to help us fulfill the aspirations of our church profile. After completing the profiles, we spent several months seeking candidates to be our next senior pastor and chose ten individuals on whom to focus – ministers who reflect many of the gifts we seek in our next pastor. We conducted two series of Zoom interviews with all of them, and then moved to a third round of interviews with five of that group.

Now we are focusing on four candidates who show the most potential for being our next pastoral leader. At this point, we have asked these four to answer in writing a number of questions, giving them an opportunity to respond more thoughtfully and extensively than is possible during the limits of a Zoom conversation. In the next few days, we will be working through their answers and then discerning which candidates in this group we think are most promising. We anticipate that our next step will be to have face-to-face conversations with the finalists.

Dr. Matt Cook has been a huge help to us, coaching our committee as we have moved forward, offering a process to follow which has helped us to be as wise and thorough as we can in our work, while seeking God's guidance at every step. We are also deeply grateful to our church staff, who have worked tirelessly to provide leadership for our church and assistance to us in our efforts.

We could not have gotten this far without your support and encouragement as a congregation. Please continue to pray for us as we seek to understand and follow God's will for our church. In all that we do, we join together around one purpose: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Amen!

With confidence in God's grace,

*The Pastor Search Committee*



FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH • ABILENE

NOVEMBER 2022

FBCABILENE.ORG

# TRUNK OR Treat

What a fabulous night we had at Trunk or Treat this year! Due to bad weather and COVID, we had not been able to have our annual outdoor event since 2017, so it was wonderful being able to go back to having a true outside Trunk or Treat.

This event does not happen without a lot of help, so we want to send out a special thank you to:

- All of those who donated money, candy, cupcakes, and cookies
- Those who brought their vehicles and decorated them and hosted the activities for the children
- Those who cooked and helped serve the hot dogs, popped the popcorn, and made the cotton candy
- Our custodial staff for the many things they did to help
- Those who hung around and helped pickup games, tables, chairs, and trash.

We are so blessed to be at a church who not only values children, but truly shows their love for our little ones by praying and loving on them as well as supporting them when we host activities.









# MEMBERSHIP

by Mike Greenfield

Last month, I wrote an article on the topic of “Being a Member” and discussed the various forms of church governance and how FBC Abilene is a church who adheres to the congregational form of governance. I discussed why we believe that is the right way for us to operate and spelled out what a person must do to become a member. (offer still stands for anyone who still has questions about becoming a member and wants to talk about it)

So, once you have become a member, now what? Great question and one I would like to explore just a bit more in this article. By way of reminder, the church has a Constitution and Bylaws which is a document designed to give structure and guidance in the continuing movement forward of the church. In the Bylaws, there are a couple of sections which are devoted to membership and what being a member actually means. Once a person has joined FBC and are voted on by the church membership, they are “fully qualified to act and vote in the transactions of the church and shall be obligated to discharge the duties of membership.” Let’s look at that sentence for just a moment. Act and Vote are the first two words we need to explore. Obviously, we know what it means to Vote. We read or hear a motion presented by a committee or some group in the church and then, because we either agree or disagree with what they have stated, we vote yes or no. But in order to really vote, we must Act in the transactions of the church. We must know what is going on and the only way to really know is to be involved. Sure, you can read the newsletter and know about the activities of the church, but to really know what is going on, you have to be present and involved. Serving on a committee is one of the best ways to really understand how the church operates, so if the Committee on Committees calls you about serving, then please answer yes and get involved. It is also extremely helpful to that committee if they know of your interest, so filling out the committee interest form is a sure way to let them know. It is not a guarantee that you will be asked to serve on the committee you selected, but it does help in their process as they try to keep all of the committees balanced with both gender and age, as well as expertise.

**The Bylaws also has a section in Article I. Section 3 titled, “Faithfulness of Members” which states:**  
*Members shall strive to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ and shall support the worship services and organized work of the church with their time, talent, and material resources as God shall lead and direct them.*

Membership carries with it, responsibilities. Those responsibilities include both spiritual as well as practical ideas. Simply being a Christian means we are to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus, whether we are a member of a church or not. So, it only makes sense that the Bylaws would include a statement like that. We also have something similarly worded in our Mission Statement: To Reach People for Jesus Christ and Together Become More Like Him. Becoming more and more like Jesus on a daily basis is what we are called to do and the church wants to help accomplish that in each member’s life.

The second part of Section 3 points to the practical ways members should be involved in the church. Attending worship on a regular basis, you have to be here to really be involved. Now, I do want to point out that we have a very faithful group of folks who, because of life’s circumstances, cannot physically come to church anymore. However, they are still very much involved and strive to stay connected in whatever way they can. They have not just disappeared! That is made evident by how they fulfill the second part of Section 3, supporting the work of the church with their time, talent, and material resources. All of us are called to support the work of the church with what God has blessed us with. Of course, money is one of those necessary ways we need to support the church, but our time and talents are just as necessary. Once again, it means you have to be involved to fully understand what it means to be a member.

I am pretty sure that when we get to heaven, we will not be asked to show our church attendance records. (though as Baptists, we could provide one!) But, I am pretty sure that the writers of the New Testament are all in agreement that the church is the Body of Christ and it is made up of various parts all working together to accomplish Kingdom work. We, you and I, are those various parts and if we are not pulling our weight, then Kingdom work suffers. So, You, yes you, are needed here at FBC to help with the Kingdom work we have been called to do!



First Baptist Church Annual  
**Thanksgiving Dinner**

Sunday, November 20, 2022  
5:30 p.m. in the Round Building  
at the EXPO Center

On Sunday evening, November 20, as a church, we will gather in the Round Building at the EXPO Center for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. This year, we will be trying a new location at the EXPO Center. We will meet in the Round Building (not the Display Building as in the past) and believe parking will be easier to access. The evening will feature a catered meal by Chicken Express; some inspirational words from our interim pastor, Dr. Matt Cook; and the sharing of communion around the tables. It is a night to gather as a church family and simply give thanks for what God has done among us.

*Please call Debra in the church offices (325-675-8116)  
by November 14 to make your dinner reservations.*

# CITY LIGHT CHRISTMAS STORE 2022

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 12, 13, and 14. 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 that could benefit from the store, please contact Melinda at the church office. 325-675-8112



## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Purchase a toy or toys and drop them off at the church office by Monday, December 5 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". Also, see Amazon link at the bottom. The items will ship to the church from Amazon.
2. Volunteer your time 3 different ways
  - a. Help set up the store on Tuesday, December 6 at 10:00 a.m.
  - b. Help by making cookies that our neighbors will enjoy as they shop.
  - c. Help on a day that the store is open. We will need a few volunteers who can help sack up items and load them in the car and also help greet our shoppers.

Note: There is an Amazon link <https://a.co/5amlSHi> that you can use to shop and/or share with others. You do not have to stick to this list. You can order what you would like to donate and then when ordering on Amazon use the address:

**First Baptist Church, Melinda Norris, 1333 N. 3rd, Abilene, Texas 79601**

Thank you all for making this time of year a blessing to so many!

# 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 14-21 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. 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 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](mailto:debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org) or [mike.greenfield@fbcabilene.org](mailto:mike.greenfield@fbcabilene.org).





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

## **CBF MISSIONARY UPDATE: MARY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Below is a letter from Mary, who is a CBF Field Personnel and ministers in Southeast Asia. As many of you know, Mary's husband, Hunter, died earlier this year after a long bout with cancer. Since this letter was written, her father also died. She is continuing to be a part of the ministry there in Southeast Asia. Please continue to pray for Mary at this time. If you would like more information on CBF Field Personnel, visit [www.cbf.net](http://www.cbf.net).

Dear John,

Good Monday morning. I hope all is well with you and yours. Please accept my apologies for being such a poor communicator over the last few months. I'm never entirely sure what to tell people about how I am doing. It is a mixed bag to be sure, but God sustains as always. My prayers continue with all of you -- for the team who joined us in Thailand, for the staff as you continue faithfully during this interim period and also anticipate what the next chapter at the church will look like, for Sunday School classes, and for the church as a whole. FBC Abilene does so many things well in God's service, and Hunter and I were grateful to be connected to this body of believers.

I am humbled by the continued financial support FBC Abilene has provided. In looking through old emails, I have not been able to clarify the length of commitment for FBC as an encourager church to our ministry. Somewhere in my pea brain, I have the idea that you have already extended past the original commitment. I would appreciate the continued support and formal relationship, but I also know requests and needs are presented to FBC on a regular basis. I will understand if it is time for the church to explore new relationships, though I will gladly move forward if the church feels we can continue for a time.

I will be sending out an update soon, but wanted to let you know that I will be leaving the States for Thailand on April 20. It took a while to get the appropriate paperwork I needed to apply for my visa -- COVID delays and governmental departmental restructuring did not help. I will be filling the role that Hunter had at SDSU with the translation work and project support as well as continuing the work with Jay & Buu. After 2 years of delay, they are anticipating construction starting again in April. I look forward to seeing them in person in the upcoming months to re-connect and better assess their situation.

Again, I cannot begin to express what you all have meant to me and what you meant to Hunter. Thank you for your care and support. Your efforts make such a difference for the kingdom.

Grace & Peace,

Mary



## CITY LIGHT THANKSGIVING BREAKFAST

City Light is hosting our annual Thanksgiving Breakfast on Wednesday, November 23 from 9:00-10:30 a.m. We need 30 breakfast casseroles to serve our neighbors that morning. If you would like to bring a casserole or volunteer to help, please contact Stephanie Stewart ([stephanie.stewart@fbcabilene.org](mailto:stephanie.stewart@fbcabilene.org)) by Wednesday, November 16.

## Rockin' Moms

Rockin' Moms is a program at City Light that ministers to women in the neighborhood. They now meet at Noon on the second Tuesday of each month and have food, fun, and fellowship! If you would like more information, please call Stephanie at 325-673-6686.



## CITY LIGHT HAD IT'S FIRST VOLUNTEER TRAINING THIS PAST WEEK!

It was great to have the volunteers to eat together, share about themselves and their work, and be able to learn about each other's ministry within City Light! Stephanie Stewart, our still fairly new Director of Community Ministries, did a great job sharing the vision of City Light and reminding us of the reason we do this work! If you want to know more about volunteering at City Light, contact Stephanie at 325-673-6686.



### Why We Do This Work

Matthew 25:34-40

Feeding, Clothing and Welcoming Strangers

Mark 12:28-34

Love God, Love People

Luke 10:25-37

The Good Samaritan

John 13:33

Be Known by our Love



# FBC UNIFIED MISSIONS OFFERING 2022

*We can change the world one community at a time!*

## SEVEN MISSION OFFERINGS COMBINED INTO ONE

Please continue to pray about how you can be involved in reaching our FBC Unified Missions offering goal of \$75,000. These offerings bring together seven different mission offerings which literally reach around the world. Giving envelopes are available in the Welcome Center and can be returned to the church office before the end of the year.

**GOAL: \$75,000      YEAR TO DATE: \$17,468**

### **Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions - 50%**

Promotes leadership, ministry, and development of the local church among the least evangelized. Provides Bible translations and digital resources to reach international refugees, immigrants, and students. Seeks justice/reconciliation for the most marginalized and works to end extreme poverty through development and transforming communities to restore natural environments.

### **BGCT World Hunger - 15%**

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

### **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 - 10%**

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.

### **Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions - 7%**

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.

### **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 - 3%**

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.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CITY LIGHT

*We are, as always, focused on meeting crisis needs, feeding the hungry, building biblical community, teaching children, and helping people move out of poverty!*

November 2022



## **5,465 MEALS SERVED**

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



## **511 VOLUNTEER HOURS**



## **30 ROCKIN' MOMS**

## **PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:**



## **42 HOUSEHOLDS**

helped with rent and utilities



## **149 WALK-INS**

bus passes, clothing and other



## **135 MAIL**

Delivered and checked



## **476 PHONE CALLS**



## **112 SHOWERS**

## **WHEN PEOPLE CAN RECEIVE HELP**

*Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays*

**Office Hours:** 9:00 a.m.-Noon, 1:30-3:00 p.m.

**Showers:** 9:00-11:20 a.m. | **Lunch:** 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

In addition:

**Sunday Breakfast:** 8:15-9:00 a.m. **Worship:** 9:00-10:00 a.m.

**Second Tuesday of Each Month: Rockin' Moms:** Noon-1:30 p.m.

# November



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**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,  
ABILENE, TX**

[https://www.facebook.com/  
FirstBaptistChurchAbileneTx/](https://www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchAbileneTx/)

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

**November 5, 4 years**

**David Curry**

Finance Assistant

**November 22, 1 year**

**Corrender Taylor**

Assistant Director of FLC

**November 22, 29 years**

**Marilyn Henderson**

GLO Ministry Assistant

- 6 Personnel Committee
- 7 Women's Bunco Night
- 9 GLO Board
- 10 GLO Thanksgiving Lunch
- 11-13 College Fall Retreat/Camp Butman
- 13 Courtesy Team Meeting  
Community Potluck @ Friendship House
- 14-21 Operation Christmas Child Collection Week
- 15 City Light Board  
Finance Committee  
Deacons' Meeting
- 19 ACU Tailgate
- 20 Annual Thanksgiving Dinner/Lord's Supper  
@ Round Bldg.
- 23 CLCM Thanksgiving Breakfast  
No Wednesday night meal/activities
- 24-25 Church Offices Closed
- 27 1st Sunday of Advent  
Lighting of the Church (6:00 p.m.)

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

*October 2022*

Budget	October	Year-to-Date
Required	\$296,020	\$2,727,200
Given	\$313,892	\$2,481,683

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



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
CHURCH • ABILENE

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