

FIRST *words*

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

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER

Sunday, November 19, 2023

5:30 p.m. in the Round Building at the EXPO Center

On Sunday evening, November 19, as a church, we will gather in the Round Building at the EXPO Center for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Last year we moved to the Round Building and had numerous positive comments, so we will be in there again this year. The evening will feature a catered meal by Chicken Express; some inspirational words from a couple of our own members as they share how God is working in their lives; 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 Noon Monday, November 13 to make your dinner reservations.



PEACE, DIRECTION, HOPE – The Journey Deeper

We are one month into our year-long exploration of what it means to work towards becoming fully formed followers of Christ. We spent the first four Sundays of October exploring Peace for the Soul, examining the ways that worship shapes our faith and is an integral part of our growth as followers of the Way of Jesus. Now, as we head into November, we move to the second area of focus (which we actually started last Sunday) – Direction for the Journey.

Some of the earliest followers of Jesus were called People of the Way. They understood that to follow Jesus was not only to hold on to the promise of eternal life to come, but to live in such a way in the present that enacted God's kingdom on earth. This is what Direction is all about. We start from a place of peace, a place of worship which helps us stay centered in the goodness and sovereignty of our God. This practice of peace helps us understand ourselves as God's beloved children and focus on our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

With our focus on God, we move to seeking the art of discernment, of understanding God's call on our individual and communal lives. We begin that journey with gratitude. I'm encouraging us all to start a practice of daily thanksgiving. If you need a journal (and didn't pick one up from church on October 29), we will be happy to get one to you. The daily practice of thanksgiving (if you give thanks for three things a day you will give thanks to God for 1,000 things within the year) helps us lay the groundwork to clearly hear God's voice.

I hope you will undertake this practice. I hope you will share your thanksgivings with me and others. May the clarity we gain as we give thanks to God for what God has given us prepare our hearts and minds to further explore God's Direction in our lives.

I look forward to this journey together. May our prayer be that Christ grows in us until that is what others see when they look at us.

Love,

Brandon



TRUNK OR Treat

(OR NO TRUNKS, BUT LOTS OF GAMES & TREATS)

Due to the weather, we may not have ended up with any trunks this year, but we had a lot of games, treats, food, as well as a whole lot of fun!! We are very grateful to have a Family Life Center which is available for us to make alternative plans so our event does not have to be canceled.

This event does not happen without a lot of help! We had over 80 volunteers who made this event possible. We sure don't want to leave anyone off a list, but we want to send out a special thank you to all of those who helped. So, a huge thanks goes to:

- All of those who donated money, candy, cupcakes, and cookies
- Those who hosted 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 do 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.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

November 13-20

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 13-20 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. Sign-up sheets showing time slots are posted in the Welcome Center, along with packing information.

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.



AN EVENING IN DECEMBER

featuring

BRADLEY HUNTER WELCH, ORGANIST

*Resident Organist, Lay Family Chair, Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Artist-in-Residence, Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas
2003 First Prize Winner, Dallas International Organ Competition*

Friday, December 15
7:00 pm

First Baptist Church
featuring The Shelton Organ
Free • Open to the Public



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE



Men's Choir
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

HOUSING FOR BAYLOR MEN'S CHOIR

There is a need for host homes for the members of this 70-voice choir. Many of you have the gift of hospitality and we ask that you consider opening your home to two or more of these university students for Saturday night, November 11. If you need further information about serving as a host home, call the Office of Worship and Music at 325-675-8118.





October
2023



7,209 MEALS SERVED

Includes: Sunday Breakfast, Community Breakfast, Community Lunch (both dine-in and take out), and Produce from the City Light Market



433 VOLUNTEER HOURS

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:



28 HOUSEHOLDS

helped with rent and utilities



405 PHONE CALLS

for assistance



267 MAIL

Delivered and checked



112 SHOWERS

CULINARY GRADUATION

By Makenzie Morrison

Despite the cold front that swept in that morning, the dining room of the City Light building was overflowing with warmth. Bouncing off the white table cloths and through conversations between friends and strangers, you could see the warmth through the window as dozens of us gathered to celebrate the program's most recent graduates. At the podium, Chef Kay gave a speech encouraging her students and friends to keep working hard and to be proud of their accomplishments. As she called each of the four graduates up to receive their diploma, pride polished her eyes and joy traveled across the room on her gentle, but powerful voice. Each set of applause for the graduates seemed to express what we couldn't speak: joy for their accomplishments, hopes for their futures, prayers for their continued journeys. The room was alive as we celebrated the courage and dedication of the four students; pictures were taken, food was savored, laughter was shared, and we knew God was present. There was too much joy for God to be absent. Through God's love: these four students made it this far, survived the rather rigorous course, and earned a party dedicated to them and their achievements. As the fruit of God's Spirit was present in the form of joy and love, it is undoubtable that these students will continue to have God with them as they travel through life, whatever comes next.



Special congratulations to our graduates: Emiliano Rodriguez, Floyd Felix, James Ruddell, and Mary Hilley.



FAMILY LIFE CENTER

The Family Life Center opened in 1981. Our mission is to provide family-oriented activities for the church membership & surrounding communities in a Christian atmosphere at an affordable price. Our facility accommodates a variety of groups such as businesses, churches, day care/day camps, private home schools, public schools, individuals with special needs, universities, military, family reunions, residential treatment centers, exercise groups, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes to list a few. We host birthday parties, bridal showers, wedding receptions, and Family Fun Nights. In addition, we have a full fitness center with lockers, showers, and sauna amenities. For those who simply want a place to walk, out of the weather, our track or gym is free to the public.

HOSTED GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS IN OCTOBER

PARTIES- 48 PARTIES

FITNESS CENTER USE- 403 INDIVIDUALS

FITNESS CLASSES- 18 CLASSES

SERENITY HOUSE- 224 INDIVIDUALS

FULL BUILDING RENTAL- 7 GROUPS

WALK-INS- 310 INDIVIDUALS

SCHOOL & HOME SCHOOL GROUPS- 180 INDIVIDUALS

SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS- 263 INDIVIDUALS

BLESSED FAMILY NIGHT

TRUNK OR TREAT (MOVED TO FLC)



FBC MISSIONS: **ACTING IN** love

HABITAT UPDATE

For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Hebrews 3:4



Christians often come together as a community to work on projects like building homes, embodying the spirit of unity and compassion by helping those in need. The Daniels' home is coming along well as a group from First Baptist Church joined forces on September 23 to install siding on the home.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE UPDATE

by Trevor and Gina

Hey church!

The FBC Friendship House has had a great few months meeting new people while saying goodbye to some and hosting various fun events.

Events like a water coloring class where Mrs. Marsha taught neighbors the basics of painting with water. It was a good time to learn something new and let everyone's creativity come out!

We also recently hosted a chili cookout where three judges determined whose chili was the best. It was a blast! Out of five chilis, the winner received a bean trophy and everyone went home happy and full.

As people have moved out of the neighborhood, we've met new neighbors and have begun to build relationships with them. We never know how long someone will live here so it's a chance to love them, connect and share Jesus when the opportunity comes about, and not take for granted the time we have with them.

Lots of good things and we're thankful for your prayers and support!



GOT DEER?

As you prepare to go deer hunting this Fall, consider donating some of your meat to City Light. We'd love to serve it to our neighbors during our community meal times!

Contact John Moore
with further questions.



VOLUNTEER TRAINING

On Thursday, November 9, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., City Light Community Ministries is holding a training session for current and future volunteers at 336 Hickory Street. There will be both joint and breakout sessions depending on your service area of interest; service options include kitchen, reception, and case management.

We will focus on learning procedures we already practice and will continue to apply in our new building after we move!

THE WEDNESDAY THING

November 8 – December 6, 2023

Please note the Final Fall Schedule for The Wednesday Thing. Below you will find the schedule for November 8 through December 6.

NOVEMBER 8, 4:00 PM ROOM 112

Phil Christopher and Myles Werntz will discuss the Baptist Study Program at Abilene Christian University.

NOVEMBER 15, 4:00 PM ROOM 112

Jim Jones will offer insight in the Israel situation and Old Testament scripture.

NOVEMBER 29, 4:00 PM ROOM 112

First Financial Bank will be discussing ways of preventing scams and protecting your income.

DECEMBER 6, 4:00 PM ROOM 112

The A Capella Fellas will be presenting a Christmas program! This group has performed for our annual Roundup Sunday, and this should be a great way to start the Christmas season.

One Monday morning in October, I woke to a text message I had received from Nancy Brock the night before. It was a picture of Louise Lockhart and Nancy with two students from ACU. She wrote, "Louise Lockhart and I took Ashlyn and Hayley to lunch today." There's not a whole lot better message to wake up to than that. It made me smile and also made me grateful for their hospitality. I asked other staff members that morning if they had met Ashlyn and Hayley, none of us had met them while they were at FBC. The good news is, even though we didn't, Nancy and Louise did. Nancy shared their phone numbers with me and in my text message to them I wrote, "You got to experience a big part of what FBC is like. It feels like home and it's a great place to be known and also to serve with your unique gifts." I believe that with my whole heart. We love people, even people who aren't officially part of our church yet. I'm grateful for a church who sees new people and invites them to lunch. As we continue to find Direction for the Journey and help one another along the way, I encourage each of us follow in the footsteps of Nancy and Louise to keep an eye out for those who are new guests and treat them as if they are old friends.



CITY LIGHT CHRISTMAS STORE 2023

Our church has the opportunity to encourage and help families from Martinez Elementary, GLO Daycare, and City Light with Christmas celebrations for 2023. We need your help by providing Christmas gifts, stocking stuffers, cookies, or a special gift which tells the reason for this season. We have the privilege to partner with families by helping to provide Christmas for the ones they love.

YOU CAN HELP BY:

- Providing toys through the Amazon link provided and have them shipped to the church.
- Providing funding for the store to purchase gifts tax free. Indicate the gift is for the City Light Christmas Store.
- Being a part of a small group of volunteers to run the store. Sign up with Beth Young at beth.young@fbcabilene.org.
- Praying for each toy or gift given to bring Christmas joy to a child and family and, that God would use these gifts as an assurance of His presence in their lives.

It brings great joy to partner with these families. If you're aware of a family who could benefit from the store or if you'd like to volunteer, please reach out to Beth in the church office (325-675-8112 or beth.young@fbcabilene.org).



<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3UD3QOY3BITNN?leftNavSection>

BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY NEEDS

The FBC Bereavement Food Ministry is looking for volunteers to join our team. This team ministers to FBC families in their loss of a loved one by providing and serving a meal on the day of the funeral/memorial service. Areas of assisting include: helping set up, providing a dish, serving, or helping clean up. The men and women of our ministry would like to invite you to join us!

For more information,
please contact

Sarah Matthews,
509-263-3313;

Connie Peacock,
325-232-3437,

or **Pam Nicholas,**
325-669-5769.

We would love to talk with you about serving with us on our Bereavement Food Ministry Team.

GRANT-IN-AID FORMS AVAILABLE

Forms are available in the church office.
Deadline to turn the form in is
Wednesday, December 6.

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

November 1, *1 year*
Chris Hufford
Custodian

November 5, *5 years*
David Curry
Finance Assistant

November 16, *1 year*
Christy Wallis
GLO Teacher

November 22, *2 years*
Corrender Taylor
FLC Assistant Director

November 22, *30 years*
Marilyn Henderson
GLO Ministry Assistant

November

- 1 Church Conference
- 5 Personnel Committee Meeting
- 7 Women's Bunco Night
- 8 Buildings & Grounds
Committee Meeting
- 9 CLCM Volunteer Training
- 11-12 College Fall Retreat/Butman
- 11 GLO Open House @ Hope Center
- 12 GLO Open House @ Hope Center
Recreation Board Meeting
- 13-20 Operation Christmas Child
Collection Week
- 15 GLO Board Meeting
- 19 Annual Thanksgiving Dinner/
Lord's Supper
- 21 Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 22 CLCM Thanksgiving Breakfast
- 23 & 24 Church Offices Closed
- 26 Lighting of the Church

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

October 2023

Budget	October	Year-to-Date
Required	\$ 296,060	\$ 2,705,600
Given	\$ 277,355	\$ 2,419,454

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

1333 North 3rd, Abilene, TX 79601
fbc@fbcabilene.org | www.fbcabilene.org
325-673-5031