



FIRSTWORDS

TRUNK OR TREAT

Woo Hoo...together, we pulled off another successful Trunk or Treat!

It may have been a little cool and windy outside, but that didn't stop any of our "organized chaos" and fun! There were many children dressed in wonderful costumes throughout the parking lot playing games, gathering candy and prizes, riding the train, laughing with friends, as well as munching on hot dogs, cotton candy, & popcorn! The joy and excitement were contagious!

It takes so many people to make events such as Trunk or Treat happen, 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, as well as 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 ways they help set up and tear down
- Those who helped set up the parking lot and got all our games and candy outside, or stayed after the event and helped pick up 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 like Trunk or Treat! Thank you so much FBC Church Family!

Dear FBC Family,

As I look outside my upstairs office, a glint of sunlight is reflected off the newly installed Christmas lights over the dining room. So around here (and as I'm writing this before Halloween) it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! This makes me excited for our first holiday season here in Abilene. We have so much to look forward to – Thanksgiving Dinner on November 23, Lighting the church and Winter Lightfest November 29, Advent beginning November 30, the sanctuary choir's Christmas Presentation on December 7, and of course our Christmas Eve services on the 24th! I have heard how enriching and uplifting these experiences are and I am eager to worship, play, and grow in Christ with you all through this season.

Our family has now been here almost three months. If I were to summarize our first quarter of a year here in one word, it would be gratitude. I am grateful for how understanding you all have been with our girls who made a huge move. You have all provided a soft-landing place for them. I am grateful for the respect and love you have given Sarah. So many of you have shown up for our marriage class and have got to experience her expertise firsthand. I am grateful for your response to my first series on Messy Grace. You all have been very encouraging, and I have had so much fun preparing and preaching from Romans.

Going forward, I look forward to our first Advent and then our first Community Weekend in early 2026. We have Dr. Steve Bezner coming and our topic will be The Family of God. January's sermon series will prime us for Dr. Bezner. Dr. Bezner is a Logsdon graduate and until this August was a pastor in northwest Houston. He is now a professor at Baylor's Truett Seminary. I believe God will use that weekend to grow us closer together so that we can better fulfill our mission – to reach others for Jesus and together become more like Him.

Grace and Peace,

RAY P. MILLER, DMIN
Pastor, FBC Abilene, TX





Relationships! That's what makes FBC such a special place! And that is why I believe the 2025 City Light Fundraiser was a HUGE success!

You know, I can't call every church member by name, nor do they know mine, but so many of our FBC family provided amazing support for the CLCM Fundraiser!

Kudos to our faithful, creative Board Members...YOU made it happen! You secured a variety of raffle items which were desirable for so many. If a suggestion was made for an item...BOOM...you found someone to donate just what was needed. And you even created priceless items! There were both large and small tasks you quietly completed. Thank you for the uncountable things you did!!

And to our sponsors, you made me think I was gifted, when in reality it was YOU who made the event happen! You opened your hearts and were willing to support City Light! Your generosity made me both laugh and cry...joyfully.

So many moving parts, a bazillion details... but church family YOU made our fundraiser happen by attending and by offering a multitude of kind words of support!

For this fundraising rookie you made our event seamless, lovely, and fun! And The Nomad made it delicious!

**Our goal was to raise \$30,000.
Together we raised \$51,000!**

Thanks to all of YOU and HIS Divine intervention...we continue building meaningful relationships and supporting the ministries in our church. We carry on, being HIS Hands and Feet to make life just a little more hopeful for our Abilene neighbors!

With humble gratitude,

SANDI RAINWATER
2025 City Light Board Chair



BLESSED FAMILY

Blessed Family may be one of the least known ministries of First Baptist Church, but it is SPECIAL!

Twice a year, the FBC Family Life Center closes to the general public for an evening dedicated to children with special needs and their families. Starting with a handful of families in 2018, the ministry survived COVID and now draws about 150 individuals with autism and other disabilities in October and April.



The brainchild of retired public school counselor Trina Fink, Blessed Family is designed to help families with special needs children by offering many different kinds of experiences -- from petting a therapy dog to working with modeling clay and watercolors. Other activities include: adapted bowling and roller skating, volleyball using a tennis net and a beach ball, navigating a colorful obstacle course on the gym floor, ping pong, and lots of table games. There's even a Calming Room with mood lighting and soft music if a child is overwhelmed by all the fun.

And there's a pizza dinner for all when the kids are "played out."

More than a dozen FBC members volunteered to ensure that each activity was staffed. Bob Fink and Joel Tucker, volunteers since the first Blessed Family event, agreed that seeing the joy in the children and their families is worth all the effort.



Linda Chisholm, leader of our church's Paws for People program, brought her nine-year-old miniature poodle, "Hope" to be the therapy dog. It marked Hope's first outing since she lost her eyesight recently. I thought I might photograph her with a visually impaired child. But before that, God provided a better picture: when guardians checked in Tumaninjuguna, a nine-year-old native of Kenya in a custom wheelchair, we learned that her name in Swahili means "Hope."

Linda and I were both choking back tears when the Kenyan Hope gently petted the head of the canine Hope, who made a joyful sound and smiled broadly. Canine Hope's wagging tail signaled a connection that the Creator of All Things Great and Small provides.



FALL WEDNESDAY THING

Come join us on Wednesday, November 12, at 4:00 p.m. in the Chapel as Glenn Dromgoole will present a program about his latest book, "The Christmas Spirit".

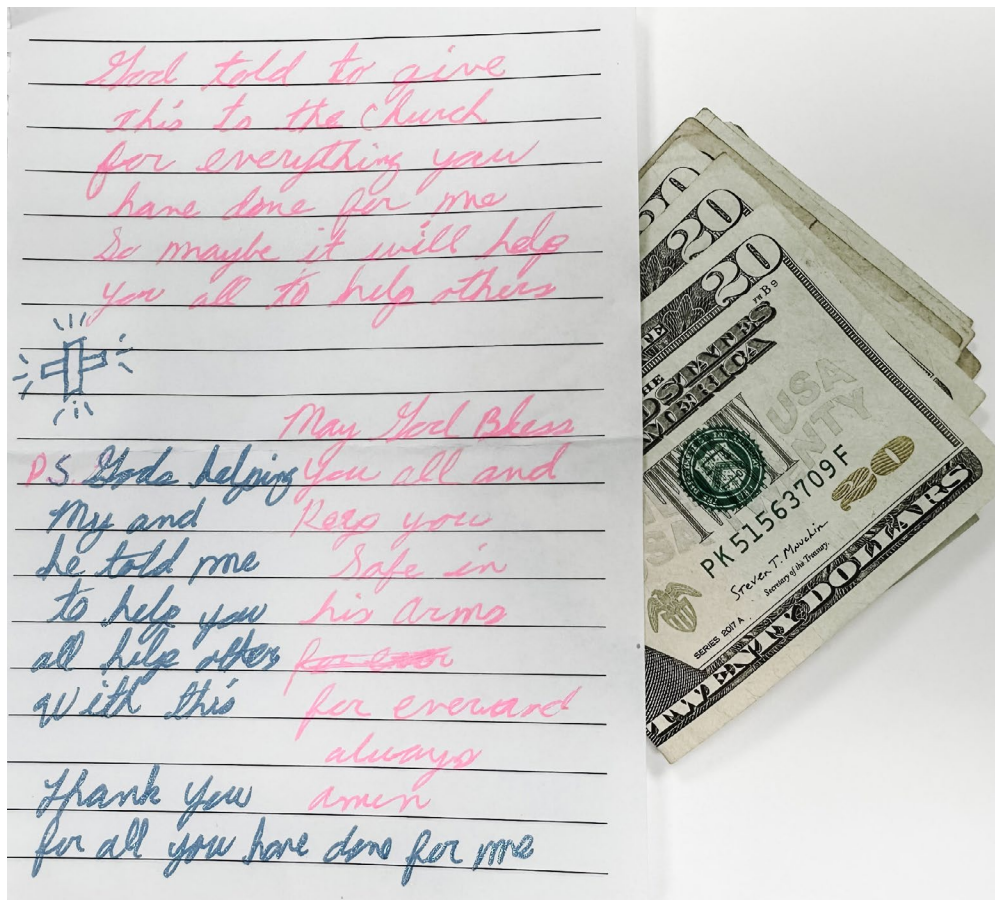
Glenn states in his book that Christmas is, of course, a religious holiday – the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Savior. Also, Advent, Shepherds, Wise Men, and Christmas Eve candlelight services. But, it is also Santa Claus, presents, parties, family gatherings, decorated trees, stockings, candy, crazy sweaters, and maxed out credit cards. Of course, there is a lot of singing of Christmas carols. This book celebrates the Christmas Spirit through a selection of spiritual and secular stories, reflections, and carols.

The afternoon presentation will include the singing of carols and will be accompanied by Sherry Frush and led by Todd Wilson.

Come along. Sing along. Share the joy.

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW

We received the sweetest gift at City Light today! A neighbor we've had the privilege of walking alongside for the past few years has gotten herself to a better place in life. Out of gratitude, she chose to give back so others in need can be helped just as she was when she was struggling. What an amazing full-circle blessing—City Light is truly grateful!



Calling all hunters!

Deer season is right around the corner. If you find yourself with an abundance of venison, City Light would be glad to take some off your hands. Your donation will help us serve hearty, home-cooked meals to our neighbors in need.

FBC UNIFIED MISSIONS OFFERING 2025

“EMBRACING NEIGHBORS, NURTURING HOPE”

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

GOAL: \$75,000 – YEAR TO DATE: \$18,383

Please prayerfully consider how you can be part of reaching our 2025 FBC Unified Missions Offering goal of \$75,000. This unified offering combines four vital mission efforts that extend the love of Christ—locally, nationally, and globally. Giving envelopes are available in the Welcome Center and may be returned to the church office anytime before the end of the year. Thank you for being a giving church and for helping us reach our mission goal for 2025.

Four different offerings combined into One Unified Missions Offering

1. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions – 60%

Supports the long-term presence of CBF field personnel serving in the United States and around the world. It helps to promote and provide: salaries, insurance and children's education for nearly 60 field personnel serving on the mission field; leadership, ministry, and development of the local church among the least evangelized; Bible translations and digital resources to reach international refugees, immigrants, and students; justice/reconciliation for the most marginalized and works to end extreme poverty through development; and transforming communities to restore natural environments.

2. Texas Baptist World Hunger – 15%

The Texas Baptist Hunger Offering unites the body of Christ to end hunger and poverty and promote holistic transformation in the name of Jesus through over 100 hunger relief and development ministries across Texas and around the world. It also supports projects across the world that feed the hungry and help the hungry help themselves in the context of holistic Christian ministry.

3. Abilene Community Transformation – 15%

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.

4. Baptist World Aid – 10%

Since 1920, Baptist World Aid has networked Baptists around the world to alleviate poverty and hunger, respond when disasters strike, and support sustainable community development projects around the globe. This is the compassionate arm of the Baptist World Alliance and provides help for persons in need globally through disaster relief, alleviation of hunger, medical assistance to those affected by HIV/AIDS, and community development.

MINISTRY OF COUNSELING AND ENRICHMENT

The Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment has so much to be thankful for! This season, my heart is full of gratitude for the many ways God is blessing our ministry. We are excited to be growing our team; welcoming Madge Duwe, LPC, and welcoming back Laura Taff, LPC. With their addition, we are better equipped to serve more clients from diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of needs.

I am also deeply thankful for our incredible board members, who continue to encourage, support, and advocate for both our counselors and the ministry as a whole. Their faithfulness uplifts our work in meaningful ways.



This month, our counselors were showered with kindness through homemade treats: sweet mint tea, cinnamon rolls, chips and dip, Reese's peanut butter cookies, trail mix, and even a vegetable tray (to balance out the sweets)! While the board has described these as small tokens of gratitude, they meant the world to us. In the quiet and sometimes difficult spaces of the therapy room, these gestures remind us that we are seen, valued, and loved.

A special word of thanks goes to Gayla Cook, LPC Associate, who represented MOCE at an information fair at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Through her efforts, MOCE is now contracted to see both TTUHSC students and employees. This is an exciting new opportunity to extend our care.

As we continue to serve the Big Country, we remain profoundly grateful to First Baptist Church for your missional, emotional, and financial support. Because of you, access to affordable and professional counseling continues to grow.

With gratitude,

ELYA WHITTEN

Director of Ministry of
Counseling and Enrichment



COUNSELOR SPOTLIGHT: *Dr. Michael McNeil*

This month, the Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment (MOCE) is honored to highlight Dr. McNeil, a psychologist who has faithfully served with the ministry since 2011. Dr. McNeil's path to counseling began in 1974, when he volunteered as a peer counselor for a community agency. That experience sparked a lifelong calling leading him to study psychology at California State University East Bay and later earn his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin. Along the way, he balanced graduate studies, family life, and a range of roles including juvenile probation officer and private practice therapist.

Dr. McNeil feels particularly passionate about helping clients with narcissistic personality disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He describes his work as "something perpetually useful. I find it a blessing to keep helping others for as long as I can." He also hopes more people understand that seeking therapy is not a sign of weakness.

For Dr. McNeil, MOCE has always been "a welcoming place with genuine care and no games." Outside of his counseling work, he enjoys writing science fiction and fantasy and has completed three novels. He humorously describes himself as "a writer, but not yet an author." He is married, has three grown children, and two grandchildren.

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Dr. McNeil's message to our community is both simple and powerful: "You don't have to be lonely. Often, loneliness is at the heart of what brings people to therapy. A therapist can help you understand that and find ways to overcome it."

We are grateful for Dr. McNeil's wisdom, humor, and steadfast service through the Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment.

THANKSGIVING BREAKFAST AT CITY LIGHT VOLUNTEERS & CASSEROLES NEEDED

It's that time of year again! We're excited to host our annual Thanksgiving breakfast at City Light on Wednesday, November 26, and we need your help.

We are looking for 30 breakfast casseroles and volunteers to assist during the event. If you'd like to bring a hot, ready-to-serve casserole, please drop it off at the volunteer entrance on Wednesday morning between 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.

If you plan to bring a casserole which needs to be baked, please bring it to City Light on Tuesday.

Your support helps make this special breakfast possible. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

If you are planning to bring a casserole or would like to volunteer, please sign up with Beth Young at City Light Beth.young@fbcabilene.org or 325-675-8187.

SWEET BLESSINGS ON A SPOOKY DAY

The fifth grade Sunday school class found a creative way to share God's love this Halloween! The students put together special "Trick-or-Treat Blessing Bags" filled with crackers, chips, and sweet treats for our neighbors at City Light. Each bag was a reminder that even on a spooky occasion, there's nothing scary about being loved and cared for. The children's joy and generosity brought smiles to everyone they served—and reminded us that kindness always shines brighter than any Halloween night.





The Sisters' Table

Be the Light: A Sister's Reflection

**At the Sister's Table, hearts were stirred,
As we shared God's truth and His Word.
Like pumpkins chosen from the vine,
He calls us His—His love divine.**

**He cleans our hearts, removes the sin,
And places His Spirit deep within.
Now with His light, we're called to shine,
So, neighbors see His love through mine.**

**Together, sisters, side by side,
We glow with grace we cannot hide.
For when God's light is shining through,
His love will touch our neighbors too.**



MINISTRY SPOTLIGHTS:



STAFF RECOGNITION:

Maria Torrez has been named GLO Daycare Teacher for the month of November! She consistently demonstrates dedication, creativity, and compassion in caring for our children. Maria goes above and beyond to create a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where each child can learn and grow. Some highlights of Maria Torrez's contributions this month include:

- Encouraging positive social interactions & prosocial behavior among children
- Planning & implementing fun, educational activities that support development
- Building strong relationships with children & families through open communication
- Demonstrating teamwork & supporting fellow staff members

Maria is currently attending Child Development courses at Cisco Junior College. GLO Day Care is grateful for Maria for her hard work and commitment to making the daycare a warm and enriching place for all children!



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.



FLC Family Life Center

PARTY PACKAGES: 83

FITNESS CENTER USES: 293

NEW FITNESS MEMBERS: 5

FITNESS CLASSES: 19

SERENITY HOUSE: 379

FULL BUILDING RENTALS: 18

WALK-INS: 186

SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS: 201

SCHOOL GROUPS: 120



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHTS:

BOB FINK

City Light Community Ministries is grateful for the faithful service of Bob Fink, a volunteer whose gentle spirit and humor brighten every day he serves.

Originally from Northeast Texas, Bob and his wife Katrina have built a close-knit family which includes their sons Rob (married to Tiffany) and Jon (married to Julie), and a wonderful crew of grandchildren – Andrew, Dylan, Sibley, Margaret, and Hazel.

Bob first began volunteering at City Light seven years ago. Before retiring from Hardin-Simmons University, he and his family would come each year to help serve at the annual Thanksgiving meal. When retirement arrived, he knew he wanted to continue giving back – this time by serving regularly at City Light alongside neighbors in need.

Bob's favorite part of volunteering is the friendships he's developed with the neighbors, staff, and other volunteers. He's known around City Light as "the best tea maker in all of Abilene," but he's just as quick to jump in wherever help is needed – preparing salads, wrapping sandwiches, or plating desserts with care and a smile.

One of his most meaningful memories is when Karen Dansby invited him to help prepare a chapbook of poems celebrating the neighbors of City Light. Later, John Moore shared the collection with the Abilene community – a special project that combined Bob's love of words with his heart for people. (And if you ask Bob, he'll also tell you that John Moore just might be a closet New York Yankees fan!)

Bob's favorite scripture is Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God."



CYNTHIA WORTHINGTON

City Light is blessed to have Cynthia Worthington as part of our volunteer family. Originally from Paris, Kentucky, Cynthia and her husband Doug have built a beautiful family which includes their son Matt, grandson Zach, and great-grandsons Elijah and Emorett.

Cynthia first began volunteering at City Light in 2019 after hearing a call for volunteers from Stephanie Stewart. What started as a simple response to help has turned into a faithful commitment that continues to bless both Cynthia and those she serves.

Over the years, Cynthia has shared her time and talents in many areas – from helping in the kitchen and dining room, to welcoming neighbors at the reception desk, and now assisting with data entry behind the scenes. No matter where she serves, her joy and gentle spirit shine brightly.

When asked about her favorite part of serving, Cynthia said she loves “people watching as a reminder of how great God is to have made us all so different, yet in His image, and with a purpose for us all.”

Her heart for service is grounded in her favorite scripture, Philippians 1:6: “And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Cynthia adds with a smile, “I am very much a work in progress.”

Each day at City Light, Cynthia says she feels blessed and grateful to be part of a mission-minded, loving body of believers. We are equally grateful for her faithful service and the warmth she brings to our ministry.



STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

November 1, 3 years

CHRIS HUFFORD

Custodian

November 5, 7 years

DAVID CURRY

Finance Assistant

November 22, 32 years

MARILYN HENDERSON

GLO M. A.

November 26, 1 year

JOCELYN ROCHA-FIERO

GLO Teacher

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

October 2025

Budget	October	Year-to-Date
Required	\$319,010	\$2,784,150
Given	\$546,867	\$2,853,009

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH ♦ ABILENE

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NOVEMBER

- 2** Personnel Committee Meeting
- 4** Women's Movie Night
- 9** First Steps Luncheon
Youth Master Chef, Jr.
- 12** Wednesday Thing
Buildings & Grounds
Committee Meeting
- 16** Missions Committee Meeting
BSM Dinner
- 17** TX Baptists Church Planting
Gathering
TX Baptists Missions Team Banquet
APO Youth Orchestra Concert
- 18** BSM Staff Meeting and Lunch
CLCM Executive Board
CLCM Full Board
Finance Committee Meeting
GLO Board Meeting
- 20** Men's Ministry Brown Bag Lunch
- 23** Annual Thanksgiving Dinner
- 24** MOCE Board Meeting
- 26** No Wednesday Night Meal/
Activities
- 27-28** Church Offices Closed for
Thanksgiving
- 29** Lighting of Church/Winter Lightfest