

FIRSTwords

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

THAILAND AND CAMBODIA REPORT

The team is back and excited to share with the church all of the exciting things happening in Southeast Asia. The main purposes of the trip was to be an encourager to the two couples who are serving in Thailand and Cambodia, see the various ministries they are involved in, and learn how First Baptist can be involved. For Hunter and Mary, being in Thailand for 23 years means they wear many different hats and have seen their ministry evolve to where in many cases they have handed off the work they started to Thai leadership who were ready. However, that means they can now focus on new ventures and challenges as they work in a country which is predominately Buddhist and Muslim. One of their latest ventures is on the island of Phuket where they are working with a Thai couple, Jay and Buu, who have started a children's home and currently have 10 adorable children who have come from some pretty rough backgrounds. We spent two different meals with the children and had the opportunity to hear some of their stories. Jay and Buu have a plan which involves purchasing 5 rai of land (approximately 2 acres) of which they have already purchased 2 of the 5 rai and hope to be able to complete the plot in the coming year and then start construction on a children's home. We visited the site and prayed over the project and could begin to see in our minds the vision Jay and Buu have. As a church, we possibly will begin to consider further involvement and who knows, maybe a construction team to go and help build the home!



We also traveled to a remote smaller island, accessible only by boat, where we met several different families who Jay and Buu have started a relationship with. This island is 99% Muslim (probably 100%, but they figure there is at least one person who is not!) and Jay and Buu have been able to share the gospel with several different people, so seed have been planted and they continue to water and tend the soil. Our presence showed the folks that the work Jay and Buu are doing has merit and possibly opened a few more doors.

Jay and Buu, along with Hunter and Mary, have been teaching English classes at a couple of different locations and so we were able to join in. However, teaching English to senior adults is quite the challenge! The second day of teaching was at a school and we had students from the 4th to the 7th grade. This was a wonderful experience and our work opened up the door for Jay and Buu to be in two other schools!

Our time in Cambodia was a bit more limited both in time and ministry opportunities. David and Lauren Bass, and their four-month-old daughter, Chloe, have been on the field for almost four years now and the bulk of their time has been spent in language study. The Cambodia language consists of 33 consonants, 23 vowels and 12 independent vowels and apparently is a bit of a challenge! However, they have been very active in the Cambodia Baptist Union Church where we attended services on Sunday, September 29. The culture of Cambodia has been greatly influenced by the Khmer



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

Dr. Phil Christopher
Senior Pastor

Dear Church Family,

Throughout our history, we have been a church of hope. A local pastor said, *"I will tell you why God has blessed First Baptist, Abilene over the years. You have always been a church who has looked outward."*

On December 17, we will celebrate our 138th Anniversary. Our founder, O.C. Pope, rode out of Abilene on that rainy day after meeting with twelve people in a house on Cedar Street and said, *"I wonder if anything will come of that?"* The mission spirit of our church provides witness to Jesus' "Parable of the Mustard Seed" where small beginnings grow into significant ministries.

We remain a people on mission who look beyond the walls of our church. It is time to take another step of giving hope to God's children. We seek to empower the poor, provide increased Christ-centered daycare, and offer counseling to struggling families.

Trust that leadership has prayed, studied, and believes God has led us to this grand opportunity to GIVE HOPE. This is a defining moment for our church. *"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

God put us on earth to be generous. I pray you will be on a spiritual journey throughout this fall. The vision of GIVE HOPE provides an amazing, yet concrete, opportunity for you to be part of God's Kingdom in the world. God's vision for our city allows First Baptist Church and you to do something great through the spiritual generosity of giving something which will last.

We can learn so much through stories of generosity. The following message from T. Boone Pickens was written prior to his passing on September 11, 2019. He said, "If you are reading this, I have passed on from this world – not as big a deal for you as it was for me."

In my final months, I came to the sad reality that my life really did have a fourth quarter and the clock really would run out on me. I took the time to convey some thoughts that reflect back on my rich and full life.

One question I was asked time and again: What is it that you will leave behind?

I long practiced what my mother preached to me throughout her life – be generous. Those values came into play throughout my career, but especially so as my philanthropic giving exceeded my substantial net worth in recent years.

For most of my adult life, I've believed that I was put on Earth to make money and be generous with it. I've never been a fan of inherited wealth. My family is taken care of, but I was far down this philanthropic road when, in 2010, Warren Buffet and Bill Gates asked me to take their Giving Pledge, a commitment by the world's wealthiest to dedicate the majority of their wealth to philanthropy. I agreed immediately.

I liked knowing that I helped a lot of people. I received letters every day thanking me for what I did, the change I fostered in other people's lives. Those people should know that I appreciated their letters.

Have faith, both in spiritual matters and in humanity, and in yourself. That faith will see you through the dark times we all navigate. Thank you. It's time we all move on.

- T. Boone Pickens



(continued from page 1) Rouge which took over the country between 1975-1979 during which time they tortured and murdered about 1.5 million of their own people. We visited the Genocide Museum and saw first-hand the story of evil enacted against the Cambodian People.

Our last day in Cambodia, where Hunter and Mary had travelled with us, we spent the morning with a devotional time; sharing of the trip; prayed: for Hunter and Mary and their work in Thailand, for David, Lauren, and Chloe and their work in Cambodia, and for our team from First Baptist and the work the church is doing through Give Hope, and then took communion together. It was a very powerful reminder that we serve a Good God who loves all people, everywhere and it allowed us to make some deeper connections, which we hope to broaden and deepen between FBC and Thailand and Cambodia.

First Baptist has joined in an effort to help the kids at Martinez Elementary and others in the Abilene and surrounding area by supplying a Care Pack for the weekend. An estimated 1,500 students in the Abilene ISD alone struggle significantly with very little food over the weekend. The schools are able to feed them a quality breakfast and lunch on school days, but on the weekend the kids struggle.

We are asking for volunteers to pack Care Packs every other Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. along with other volunteers who are sponsoring other schools in the area. About 1,200 packs are packed each week. It is very organized and time goes quickly! Families are also welcome to sign-up to volunteer. You can sign up for one time or multiple times during the year.



Please call Melinda in the church office at 325-675-8112 to sign up or for more information.

(continued from page 2)

I know we could think it was easy for Boone to be generous – a 68,000 acre ranch and private jet. Yet, did you hear the spirit of generosity in his final words? Often people with his affluence find it difficult to give and use their resources for others. I was taken by his belief and value that “his philanthropy exceeded his net worth....”

We are not T. Boone Pickens, but God has blessed us with abundant resources to be generous. The clock one day will run out on us. What will we have to show for it? Let us not be like the man in Jesus’ parable who spent his life building bigger barns to store all of his wealth and failed to realize his life would be demanded that night. Boone’s question remains for us, “What will we leave behind?”

What were you put on earth for?
Phil

new WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS



Our City Light Culinary Academy students, along with Chef Kay and Chef Caitlin, have been preparing and serving our Wednesday night meals every week and they have been delicious! If you haven't been to a Wednesday night meal in a while, you might want to come see and taste what is going on! Most of the food is prepared from scratch and there is always a salad bar and a separate children's choice on the menu.

The cost is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children and preschool is free.

They start serving at 5:00 p.m. See you there!

Check First Reminders each week for the menu or contact the church office at 325-673-5031.



UPWARD BASKETBALL

(4 years of age through 6th Grade)

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

FBC FAMILY LIFE CENTER

1442 N. 2nd Street - Abilene, TX 79601 Phone: 325-675-8144

PIONEER DRIVE RECREATION MINISTRY

701 S. Pioneer Drive - Abilene, TX 79605 Phone: 325-692-7222

Online Registration: <https://registration.upward.org/UPW69633>

The early registration cost per child for basketball is \$65;

after September 30, the cost is \$75.

Late registration of \$90 will start November 1.

Deadline for registration is November 7.

Basketball shorts are optional at a cost of \$15.

Pioneer Drive will host practices and games for 4 year olds through 2nd grade.
FBC Family Life Center will host practices and games for 3rd through 6th grades.

Volunteers are needed for coaching and game day operations!

If you can help, please contact Mike Brady

(W) 325-675-8144 (C) 325-669-1225

FIELDS OF FAITH

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9

7:00 p.m. at Shotwell Stadium
No Wednesday Night Youth Group

BOOMER LIFE!

2019 BOOMER LIFE RALLIES ROAD TRIP

Tuesday, October 22
9:30 AM – 3:30 PM
First Baptist Church Abilene

Learn from effective boomer ministry leaders and share ideas, issues, and approaches with other church staff and volunteers in this one-day event.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Ministers to Boomers, Seniors, and Median Adults
Volunteers/Sunday School Leaders
Senior Pastors

Any others interested in building ministry to reach baby boomers and/or senior adults

REGISTRATION

\$25 (through September 30) • \$35 (beginning October 1)

If you register through First Baptist Church, we will cover the registration fee.

TRUNK OR TREAT

Are you ready for some chaotic, crazy fun? If so, you should join us on Wednesday, October 30, when we will have our annual Trunk or Treat event from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. in the south parking lot. We will have around 30 trunks with games and candy, fun train rides, and free hot dogs!

It is so much fun to see the cars which are decorated so cute as well as many costumes worn by both children and adults!

In order for this event to happen, we need people to volunteer to bring their vehicles, candy, and/or cookies/cupcakes/cakes. If you would like to help in any way, please call Jennifer at 675-8105.

WE HOPE YOU
WILL JOIN
US FOR THIS
WONDERFUL
COMMUNITY
EVENT.



GIVE HOPE

FOR OUR CHILDREN
FOR OUR FAMILIES
FOR OUR COMMUNITY



FABRIC *of* HOPE

The Give Hope Capital Campaign is creating a piece of artwork to display in the newly purchased building. We need from the congregation a piece of cloth that in some way represents hope. It can be as small as 2" or as large as 10". There is also the option of a picture, a word, or a passage of scripture which symbolizes hope.

The pieces of cloth can be brought to the office Monday through Friday or on Sunday morning. The pictures, words, or scripture verses need to be emailed to courtney.edwards@fbcabilene.org in a jpg format.

The deadline is Thursday, October 10.



Blessed FAMILY FUN TIME

On September 26, the church hosted Blessed Family Fun Time at the Family Life Center. This event is held bi-annually in the fall and spring. All families in the Big Country who have a child or adult child with special needs, are invited to participate in free, fun activities from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the FLC. The activities are adapted for children's special needs. This event is in its fourth year and the families, always having fun, look forward to the next event, which will be held next spring.

STAFF UPDATES



On September 5, 2019, Lee Curiel celebrated his 40th Anniversary as an employee with First Baptist. Lee faithfully serves as one of our custodians. But if the whole story were to be told, he has been around here much longer than 40 years. Lee's grandmother was also a custodian here at the church and as a child, Lee would come to work with her. So, FBC has been a part of his entire life and we are blessed to have him work here.

Then on October 22, 2019, Mike Brown will celebrate his 35th Anniversary as an employee. However, for Mike it will be his last as he is officially retiring on October 25. So as a way to honor his faithful service to the church, a reception will be held in the Dining Room on Thursday, October 24, at 3:00 p.m. In addition to the reception, a love offering for his retirement will be collected and if you would like to participate, simply bring your gift to the church offices or on Sunday morning and mark it for the Mike Brown Love Offering.

THE LAST ROUND UP

Thirty-five years is but a small measure of time, but certainly the time I've spent at First Baptist has truly been a measure of great importance to me. It has been a time of growth and a time of maturation as well. The Bible tells us that perseverance is what counts...that we finish the race. I am truly grateful for all the leadership roles you have demonstrated during my time at First Baptist. Many thanks to my immediate supervisor as I am sure that I have tried his patience a time or two.

In some ways, it has been quite an education for me. Never one to have much in the parental department, I always had difficulty having to deal with substitute roles. Having a father who was married to his military career and a mother who suffered substantial mental and physical disabilities in her life...I was fortunate that the role models in my life were truly genuine people who went the extra ten yards to show me the graciousness of our Lord.

My favorite scripture to read is 2 Samuel chapter 9. King David's treatment of Mephibosheth is a real eye-opener. Many times God had to intervene in David's life, but here David shows us what it means to keep a promise. David's promise to Jonathan is not only kept, but a greater promise to us is revealed. We know David was a man after the heart of God and in this God breathed scripture, we are shown a greater truth.

Chapter 9 is not a very long chapter but we are reminded twice that Mephibosheth's physical condition did not change. In a time when miracles were being performed and immediate results were taken place we are presented with a much greater scenario.

In fact, there are two scenarios which come to mind here. One with the lights off...and one with the lights on.

Had David chosen to rid the world of Mephibosheth (like all the other kings), indeed Mephibosheth would have been a "dead dog." (Lights out) Where would he go?

But David chose the high ground and Mephibosheth was granted a seat of authority at David's table. (Lights on)

This chapter captures a special moment in David's life as he remembers Saul and Jonathan. (This is how we are remembered) Just as we who read this scripture know that we have a God who keeps His promises (to Abraham and to us) and this should give us the courage we need to tell others about Jesus.

I call this the last round up because as Ziba and his family (entourage) come together to farm the lands, Mephibosheth eventually hands the ownership of the lands to Ziba's people.

Thanks for 35 great years!
Michael Brown

EVENT CALENDAR:

OCTOBER

- 3 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 6 Personnel Committee
A Down Home Christmas Rehearsal
- 7 PAWS for People
- 8 Rockin' Moms
- 9 Buildings & Grounds Committee
- 10 Maturing Adults Trip to Lubbock Museums
- 13 A Down Home Christmas Rehearsal
- 14 GLO Closed
PAWS for People
- 15 GLO Open House
Finance Committee
Deacons' Meeting
Craig Middle School Choir Concert
- 16 GLO Board Meeting
- 17 Healing Hearts Meeting
Clack Middle School Choir Concert
- 20 Maturing Adults Recognition Lunch
Foundation Board Meeting
Missions Committee
Capital Campaign Leadership Meeting
- 21 PAWS for People
Capital Campaign Leadership Meeting
- 22 One Day Boomer Event
Abilene Callahan Baptist Assoc. Dinner
Capital Campaign Leadership Meeting
- 23 Church Conference
- 24 Capital Campaign Leadership Meeting
- 27 A Down Home Christmas Rehearsal
- 28 PAWS for People
- 29 Clack Middle School Orchestra Concert
- 30 Trunk or Treat
Hospital Visitation Team

STAFF

ANNIVERSARIES

October 1, 5 years
Maria Veracruz
GLO Teacher

October 1, 1 year
Allie Workman
GLO Director

October 22, 35 years
Mike Brown
Custodian

October 23
Melinda Norris, 1 year
M. A. to Pastor for Missions

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

September 2019

Budget	Sept	Year-to-Date
Required	\$257,058	\$2,439,237
Given	\$319,100	\$2,426,435

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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