

# FIRSTwords

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

## OCTOBER UPDATE FROM THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastor Search Committee is swimming in the deep end of the pool these days. We are diving deep into conversations with candidates for the senior pastor position in our church.

After months of preparation and searching, we have arrived at a group of ten outstanding individuals whom we are carefully considering. We divided into three sub-groups for a first round of Zoom interviews with each candidate for the purpose of getting acquainted. Then in the latter part of September, the whole committee met with each candidate for extensive conversations by Zoom, asking them some of our most important questions and also responding to questions they had for us.

As we enter October, the committee is carefully evaluating what we learned from our interviews with the candidates. While they are all remarkable ministers, we are collaboratively considering how the abilities and gifts of each one line up with what our church needs, as described in our congregational conversations and profiles. Then, we will focus on the top candidates, engaging them in additional interviews and checking references.

While we have an overall plan of how to move forward, our process is also organic, in that we are being sensitive to what seems right at each step of the way. Our committee is diverse in background and perspective, brilliantly reflecting the breadth of our “big tent” church. As a result, our conversations about candidates are rich with sensitivity and insight. Most importantly, we are all committed to discerning how the Spirit of God is guiding us to the person who seems best able to lead our whole congregation to fulfill what Christ is calling us to be now and in the future.

Please pray diligently for us in these profound days of seeking and listening. The work is time-intensive, and it's a challenge to fit the many meetings each week into our already busy schedules. Yet, we are singular in our commitment to be faithful on the journey, humbled by the opportunity of service, and joyful about the future of our church - knowing that the one who began a good work in us will bring it to completion.

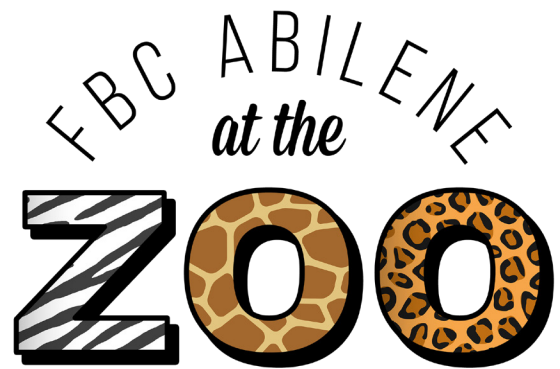
Trusting in God's grace,

*The Pastor Search Committee*



On Sunday, October 16, we will once again have FBC Night @ the Zoo. This is a free event for all FBC members and their guests. We want this event to serve two purposes: a night when the church can gather and fellowship together in a wonderful and exciting setting, and a night when church members can invite guests who might be looking for a church. This event is extremely low key and provides a great way for you to introduce someone to members of our church.

In order to have enough food (hamburgers and hot dogs) for everyone, please make your reservation in Sunday school, by calling Debra in the church offices (325-675-8116), by emailing Debra (debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org), or by simply clicking on this [link](#) and filling out the form online!



OCTOBER 16 | 6 PM

# TRUNK OR Treat

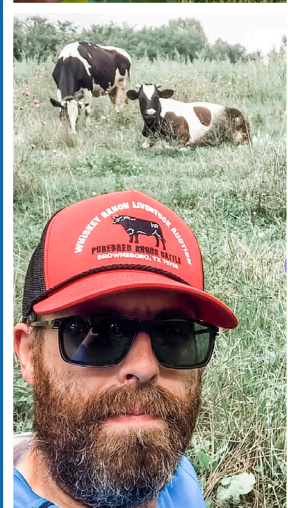
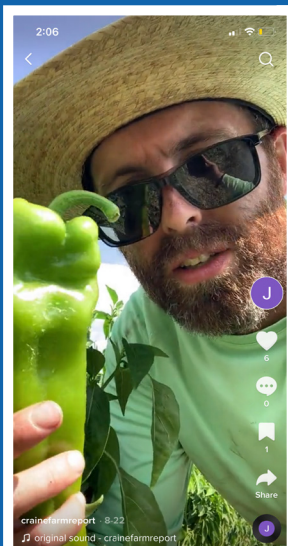
**Wednesday, October 26**  
**5:30 - 7:00 p.m.**

It will be so much fun to see the cars so cutely decorated, as well as the many different costumes that both children and adults wear! 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.**

We can already hear the cheering as we are preparing to go back to our traditional Trunk or Treat event on Wednesday, October 26, from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. in the south parking lot of the church. We are hoping to have around 30 trunks with games and candy. We will also be giving fun train rides and serving free hot dogs!





## OCTOBER MISSIONARY UPDATE:

Jeff and Alicia Lee  
Serving in Macedonia

If you don't follow Jeff Lee on social media, you are missing out! It is fun to see the progress they are making with the greenhouses enabling them to grow many new items. They have also added "new to them" farming equipment and are so proud when it works! They continue to have the cow ministry and are adding new ideas which help the people they minister with to live better lives. Thank you for your gifts which make it possible for Jeff and Alicia to do the work they do.

Find out more at:  
<https://cbfblog.com/tag/jeff-lee/>

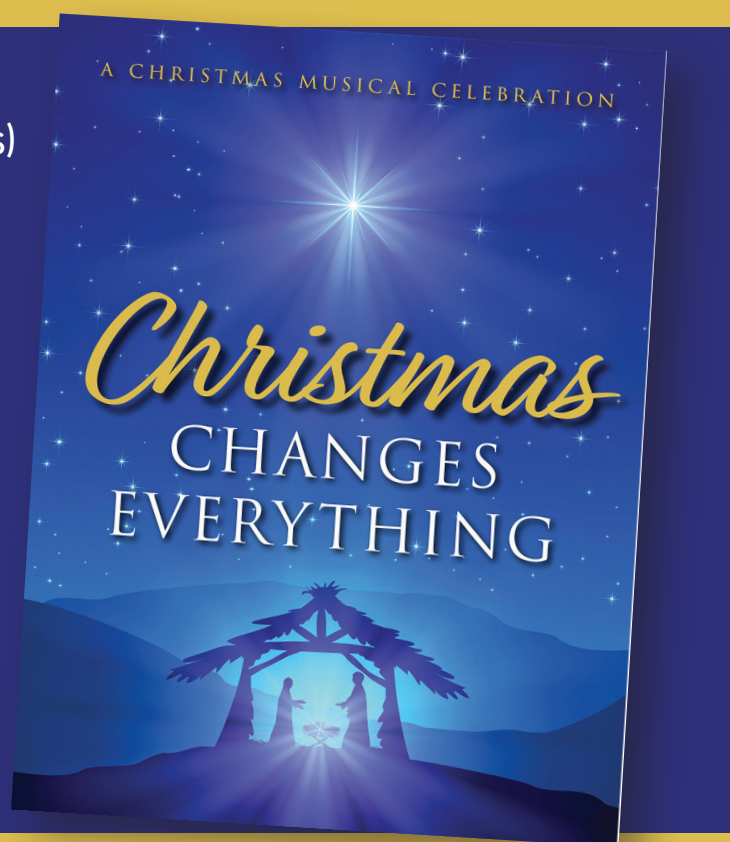
Christmas Only Singers (Holiday Hummers)  
are invited to join the Sanctuary Choir  
and Celebration Orchestra for Christmas  
Changes Everything

**Rehearsals are Sunday, 6 pm**

**Oct. 2, 9, 23, 30**

**Nov. 6, 13, 27 (5 pm)**

We have all you need to help you  
learn the music and join us!





# BLANKETS FOR UKRAINE ORPHANAGE



The FBC Healing Hearts ministry partnered with the Christ Church Anglican of Midland and Global Samaritan to make and deliver to an orphanage in Ukraine blankets for the children as winter approaches. A total of 157 gifts were made and distributed by the two groups.



## UPDATE:

A lot of work has been done and yet, there is some work left to do at the Houses for Healing!

We are pleased with the progress and appreciate all the work so many have already done.

***Special thanks to Charlie Jowers, Steve Steed, and Trevor Allen.***





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 any of the following:

**Brenda Hawthorne**  
325-669-4497

**Sarah Matthews**  
509-263-3313

**Pam Nicholas**  
325-669-5769

**Connie Peacock**  
325-232-3437

**Carlene Spicer**  
325-668-4956

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

## CITY LIGHT CULINARY GRADUATION

***We are so proud of our most recent graduates of the City Light Culinary Academy!***

They have worked hard in this 12-week program to not only get a food handler certificate, learn about cooking and food service, but also learn life skills which will help in all areas of their lives.

We continue to work with all our graduates by adding to their learning process and helping them do the best with the skills they have attained during this time.

There will be new classes starting January 2023. If you know anyone interested in this program or want to know more, please contact Kayleen Mills at 325-673-6686 or Melinda at 325-675-8112.

**Congratulations to our graduates:**  
**Crystal Collier Dylan Mills Rickey Meredith**





## COLLEGE MINISTRY UPDATE

We had a great time at the ACU and HSU church fairs welcoming students back to Abilene and inviting them to FBC. Many great conversations were had and we look forward to what God is going to do in and through our college ministry this year.

We had our first monthly fellowship dinner at the Werntz's home. It's always good to share a meal and our lives together outside the normal paces and rhythms of life. If you'd be interested in hosting a monthly fellowship dinner for the college students, please contact Matthew.





# PLAY WITH PURPOSE

UPWARD  
SPORTS

MILLIONS OF KIDS.  
THOUSANDS OF COMMUNITIES.  
COUNTLESS CHANGED LIVES.  
FIND OUT WHY.



BASKETBALL LEAGUE ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**HELP YOUR PLAYER GROW ON OR OFF THE COURT!**

**GRADES 3-6 | EVALUATIONS ON NOV 7, 8 AND 10TH | COST IS \$85**

**WHERE DO I SIGN UP?**

**[HTTPS://REGISTRATION.UPWARD.ORG/UPW83048](https://registration.upward.org/upw83048)**

**Registration is also available at the Family Life Center**

**REGISTRATION ENDS NOV 10, 2022**

Over the past few years, I have been in several different conversations with individuals who, with great confidence, state that they are members of First Baptist Church, Abilene. However, I have a brooding sense that what they are stating is not entirely true and I am not sure how to go about correcting them. So, with that preface, let's talk about church membership for a few minutes.

By way of history, there are basically three different methods of church government or polity: Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational. (Note: the use of the word episcopal should not be confused with the Episcopal denomination, but rather the Greek word it is derived from which means "bishop." While the Episcopal denomination employs an episcopal church government, so do other denominations i.e. the catholic church. Also, the word Presbyterian is derived from the Greek word for "elder" and there are many other churches which utilize a Presbyterian church government style.) But, for our discussion, we are going to focus on only two of the three methods: congregational vs. elder (Presbyterian).

In a church which has as their governance the elder method, they would typically have a small group of elders who are tasked with making all of the decisions for the congregation. They are responsible for all personnel decisions, all financial decisions, all property concerns, and set the direction for the church. Typically, the senior pastor is one of the elders and help in the decision-making process as well as communicating with the congregation. Decisions are made by this group and the congregation is informed of what those decisions are.

Churches which are congregational in how they operate, would be considered democratic in the decision-making process. Issues which need to be decided by a vote are taken to the congregation and the congregation, by vote, decides the answer. Typically, there are groups who help in the operation of the church, i.e. committees, and when they have items which need a decision, the congregation makes the decision. Obviously, this is the method of church governance we have here at First Baptist. So, all major decisions are brought before the church and the church votes on them. And, by that vote, the congregation takes ownership of the decision and is held accountable for whatever that decision dictates. That is why we present the annual Ministry Budget to the church for a vote, because the members of the church are held accountable for supporting that budget.

So, what does all that have to do with church membership? First Baptist Church has a Constitution and Bylaws document which guides the church in its governance. In the document, it states what is required for membership and that members are eligible to: vote on all matters of the church, serve on committees and boards, serve as deacons, and serve in leadership roles. The Constitution and Bylaws document has been in place for over 100 years and has served the church well. It states:

### **Article III. Membership**

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and who have obeyed Him in the scriptural ordinance of baptism.

### **Article V. Character**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it.

We have two very basic requirements for membership: professing Jesus Christ as Lord and baptism by immersion. Baptist, from the very beginning, made believer's baptism the one issue they would not bend on. Following the example of Jesus and being baptized by immersion because of your individual belief in Him as



Lord and Savior was non-negotiable. First Baptist has held that same conviction since 1881 and simply state that to fully be a member means to abide by these two things.

So, why is membership important? Membership in a Baptist church dates back to the middle ages and the protestant reformation. As questions about the Catholic church began to arise and the “protesters” like Martin Luther began to speak out, various groups began to form. One of those was the predecessors of who we are as Baptists today. Because of the threat of persecution by THE Church, these splinter groups needed some way to ensure their own safety and so they developed a means of membership and a letter which the person could take with them to a new town and the Baptist church in that town. Basically, the letter was a promise from church A to church B that the person was not a spy and was in good standing and should be accepted by them. This tradition has continued on and Baptist churches exchange “letters of membership” when someone moves to a new town or to a new church. Once the letter is received, the person is voted on and can fully participate in all aspects of the church.

What if a person comes to FBC, but not from a Baptist church?

Membership can be by letter, but also by statement. In the Bylaws, it states:

#### **Section 4. Membership by Statement.**

A person who joins this church by statement shall be qualified to act and vote in the transactions of the church and shall be obligated to discharge the duties of membership.

One may join by statement (1) if the person is or was a member of a church of like faith and order and the person's records, for any reasonable cause, are no longer available or (2) if one is a member of a church of another denomination that has a similar faith and practices immersion according to the scriptural ordinance of baptism.

So, not everyone who joins the church comes from a Baptist background, but they agree with what we believe and abide by those beliefs to be a member.

Just recently, we asked for people to nominate folks who in their estimation would be a good candidate for being a deacon here at FBC. One such individual who was nominated fits the description of what is needed to be a deacon, except they are not a member. They have joined Sunday school, they participate in all aspects of the church, but they have not actually joined the church. Therefore, they are not eligible to be deacon according to our governing documents. Similarly, we are soon (we hope!) to have a person presented to us as our potential new Senior Pastor. After all of the various ways we will get to know this person, they will ultimately be brought before the congregation for a vote. A vote which can only be done by those who are members of the church.

If in the reading of this article some of you are thinking, “Am I really a member?”, and you are not 100% sure of the answer, then now would be a great time to talk to one of the pastors and get any questions answered that you might have. We want this to be an easy process and not one which folks are frightened or confused about. Not been baptized by immersion, we can work with you to have that done and if it needs to be a time other than Sunday morning, let's talk. Not entirely sure what professing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior means, then let's sit down and walk through what God's Word, the Bible, has to say. Just need to talk, then by all means let's talk!

# 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: \$14,993**

### **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!*

October 2022



## **6796 MEALS SERVED**

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



## **514 VOLUNTEER HOURS**



## **35 ROCKIN' MOMS**

## **PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:**



## **102 HOUSEHOLDS**

helped with rent and utilities



## **113 WALK-INS**

bus passes, clothing and other



## **152 MAIL**

Delivered and checked



## **578 PHONE CALLS**



## **78 SHOWERS**



*Impromptu piano lesson with  
Patti Walker at City Light*



#fbcabilene

<https://www.instagram.com/fbcabilene/>



@fbcabilene

<https://twitter.com/fbcabilene>



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,  
ABILENE, TX**

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchAbileneTx/>

# October

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

October 1, 8 years

**Maria Veracruz**

GLO Teacher

October 1, 4 years

**Allie Workman**

GLO Director

October 1, 3 years

**Raul Garcia**

Custodian

October 25, 4 years

**Melinda Norris**

Ministry Assistant to  
Pastor for Missions

October 25, 1 year

**Jessie Garcia**

Custodian

- 1 McMurry Tailgate
- 2 College @ Play Faire Park  
Personnel Committee
- 6 Blessed Family Night @ FLC
- 9 Foundation Board
- 12 Buildings & Grounds Committee
- 16 Missions Committee  
FBC Night @ the Zoo
- 18 CLCM Board  
Finance Committee  
Deacons' Meeting
- 19 GLO Board Meeting  
Church Conference
- 23 Lord's Supper
- 26 Trunk or Treat
- 29 HSU Tailgate

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

September 2022

<b>Budget</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Required	\$258,020	\$2,431,180
Given	\$230,820	\$2,163,669

*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](mailto:fbc@fbcabilene.org) | [www.fbcabilene.org](http://www.fbcabilene.org)  
325-673-5031