

# FIRST words

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



## GLO: GREATER THINGS TO BE DONE

*Kristian Spencer*

If you walk the halls of God's Little Ones Daycare, you would be treated to the sounds of children who are learning about the world around them, laughing with their friends, and being dearly loved by their teachers. For the last 54 years, GLO has not only been a source of childcare for families in our community, but also a foundation of faith and love in the hearts of little ones. As a parent whose child has been loved and cared for at GLO for the past 3 years, I see firsthand the kingdom work being done in the lives of children, but also in the community of women who work together to provide such excellent and nurturing care. My daughter, Lily, has made her very first friends, learned crucial developmental skills, and experienced what it means to be loved by a community. She has been prayed for, encouraged, celebrated, and dearly loved. Lily is just one of thousands of lives who have been impacted by the ministry that is GLO Daycare and of the many who are still to come. This impact has been made possible through the faithfulness of a God who answered the prayers of a team of women many years ago to create a place where families of all income levels can know their child has a place to belong and be nurtured.



The Give Hope Campaign seeks to continue this story of faithfulness through the renovation of First Christian, including a new and improved facility for GLO which allows their work to be expanded to meet the needs of even more of our community. Over the past four years, as a church, we witnessed the faithfulness of God to provide the finances and the people to make this dream a reality. We walked in faithfulness, trusting in God's call for "greater things to be done in this city." Over the next few months, the final stages of GLO's building project will be completed, and the doors will open to a new era in the life of GLO. As the chair of the GLO Board for 2023, as a parent of a GLO child, and as a member of this wonderful church, I ask that you join us in preparing for what is to come through prayer, volunteering

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# PEACE, DIRECTION, HOPE

In the last three weeks of September, we have explored together what will be our vision and theme for the next year (and beyond) – Peace for the Soul, Direction for the Journey, and Hope for the Hungry.

We are exploring these three ideas because by focusing our energies on these three categories, we will be able to work with intentionality at growing deeper in our faith. As a church, our mission is “To Reach People for Jesus Christ and Together Become More Like Him.” These three areas of focus – Peace, Direction, and Hope – are the “how” we achieve our mission.

As I’ve said from the pulpit, these three areas are not a hierarchy, they are a circle (or a triquetra). We do not rank ourselves against others in these areas (though self-examination is an important part of the Christian life, and we’ll discuss that more in November). We do not see these areas as stepping stones from one to another. Instead, we see these as three aspects of our faith. I’ve called them Trinitarian. They are united and unique. Our worship (Peace) gives us the trust to participate in discipleship (Direction) which then gives shape to our missional foci (Hope). These areas of focus are both individual and corporate. We cannot take this journey alone.

I am excited to journey down this road together. These building blocks provide us a scaffold to continue digging deeper into our faith, to work it out with fear and trembling. I am excited to see how we grow together, trusting the sustainer of our faith to work towards its completion.

We’ll begin this journey together in earnest on October 1 as we explore the different aspects of peace that God wants to offer us. Can’t wait to see you there.

Love,

Brandon



*Continued from Cover*

your time, or donating to meet other needs of GLO. You will see these requests on social media and in church communication, as well as hear about opportunities for involvement and recruitment in church services. An upcoming need will involve helping with food for our recruiting events at the end of October as we seek additional early child care educators and potential families in need of child care. If you feel led to serve in this way, please contact Candy Rains at [candy.rains@fbcabilene.org](mailto:candy.rains@fbcabilene.org).

The Lord has been so faithful in leading us to this moment. He will be faithful in the years to come. Let us walk in faithfulness, giving of ourselves and our resources to this life-changing ministry.

May we remember...

"There is no one like our God

There is no one like our God

For greater things have yet to come

And greater things are still to be done in this city

Greater things have yet to come

And greater things are still to be done in this city"

- Chris Tomlin, *God of This City*



**Make sure to keep an eye out for the  
Unified Missions Offering Envelope arriving in October.**

**Our goal is \$75,000      Year to date \$9,841**

The envelope form is titled 'UNIFIED MISSION OFFERING' in red. It includes a section for the donor's name and a dollar sign followed by a line for the amount. The text on the envelope reads: 'Please pray about how you can be involved in reaching our FBC Unified Missions offering goal of \$75,000. These offerings bring together four different cooperative efforts that reach around the world:'. Below this are four bullet points: 'Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions Offering' (supports CBF field personnel), 'Texas Baptist—Mary Hill Davis Offering' (unites the body of Christ to end hunger and poverty), 'Abilene Community Transformation' (provides resources for responding to specific ministry opportunities), and 'Baptist World Aid' (since 1920, supports sustainable community development projects). The envelope concludes with the instruction: 'Please return the envelope to the Missions or Finance Office with your offering.'



# Women's Retreat 2024

Jill Hudson

In Biblical times, women would gather at the well to talk with one another, gather water, and build strong bonds of friendship. At FBC, the women of our church gather throughout the year for times of worship, games, Bible study, and service. A highlight of our well gatherings is our annual Women's Retreat. And our next retreat will be one for the memory books!

The theme of the 2024 retreat is Breathe. Doesn't that sound amazing? We are going to take time to rest, be renewed, and take a deep and collective breath together. I can't wait. After the holidays and the start of the new year, I think we will all benefit from deep breathing and resting together.

The 2024 annual Women's Retreat will be Friday and Saturday, February 23-24. The location? Your very own church building - FBC Abilene. Wait, you might say. We're retreating at the church?? Why yes. Yes, we are.

And here's the reason...The Women's Ministry Team has been dreaming up new ways to think of retreating so this next year will be at the church building, but the year after that might be in Colorado or New Mexico. Who knows? We're stepping outside the box and doing all kinds of good thinking about what retreating together could be.

We are going to do a totally different kind of retreat next year. And for that, we need space. And there is no hotel that can match the kind of space we have at our church building!

Here are some of the cool things you can look forward to at next year's Women's Retreat. Worship sessions much like those of our Women's Nights of Praise complete with songs, testimonies, prayer, and Scripture reading. A speaker you all know, but whom I know better. (Ooooh...a little mystery!) Workshops led by women on cool topics like yoga, painting, culinary arts, prayer walking, and artistic Bible note taking. Missions activity which will directly benefit the Abilene community. And the men of our church are going to cook for us! You'll get four delicious meals served up by the menfolk so we can focus on taking a much-needed break from the daily grind.

The retreat will begin Friday night and wrap up Saturday night. If you feel nostalgic for the opportunity to stay in a hotel on Friday night, do not despair - we've got you covered. We've reserved a block of rooms at the brand new Doubletree hotel in downtown Abilene!! So, you can get away from the hustle and bustle of your own house, as well and treat yourself to a true night away. Of course, if you'd rather sleep in your own bed, that's an excellent option too.

I hope that each woman of FBC will mark her calendar right now to make time and space for this important time of fellowship, worship, and sacred space. You are important to our community and you need time to retreat and breathe. I mean if Jesus retreated, I guess we should too!

# FRIENDS, FOOD, & FAITHFULNESS

*Kristian Spencer*

On September 12, while the rain poured outside, 84 women ages 16 to 90 gathered together in the chapel for a night of worship and testimony. The night began with delicious treats, as is the Baptist way, and a time of fellowship with one another. The focus of the evening was God's faithfulness and this truth was evident in the words we sang and the stories that were shared. Sophia, Jill, and Brandon Hudson graciously used their gifts to guide a time of worship that was meaningful, intentional, and perhaps the start of a family band (Quinn, are you ready?!), with a sweet addition of sign language offered by Anna Voth. Sophia's soulful voice as she led us through verses which spoke of not only what God has already done in our lives, but what He promises us He will continue to do, brought a sense of deep peace into the room. Makenzie Morrison & Nancy Brock boldly proclaimed the faithfulness of God in their own lives through testimonies of recent struggles, as well as a lifetime of seeing evidence of a God who has continued to show up. Both of these women told their stories with humor, humility, and gratitude. Thank you to the many women who donate their time and gifts to organize nights such as this, to those who use their gifts in worship, to those who are willing to share their story, and to the many others who simply show up with hearts expectant for what God will do.

## night at the ZOO

On Saturday, October 7, 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. So, mark your calendar for the evening of October 7 and begin thinking about who you might invite.



September  
2023



## 8,8,168 MEALS SERVED

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



## 353 VOLUNTEER HOURS

### PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:



## 23 HOUSEHOLDS

helped with rent and utilities



## 585 PHONE CALLS

for assistance



## 208 MAIL

Delivered and checked



## 96 SHOWERS

# CARES ACT GRANT REPORT

Part 1 - Revised

## \$196K

In two months, City Light dispersed \$196,559.05 in rent relief to more than 70 homes in Abilene.



## 243 MONTHS OF RENT

Through this grant, we were able to cover 243 months of rent across the 71 households we supported. That's more than 20 years of rent!

## 72 HOUSEHOLDS

With these funds we helped 72 diverse\* households. While each neighbor we served is unique, they are all **residents of Abilene**. These funds flowed directly into our local community and economy!



### RANGE OF DISTRIBUTED FUNDS



Min:  
\$559.05.00

Med: \$2,535  
Avg: \$2,729.97

Max: \$5,931.00

**A special thanks to the United Way of Abilene for entrusting these funds to City Light Community Ministries!**

\*WANT MORE DETAILS INVOLVING DEMOGRAPHICS? KEEP UP WITH OUR REPORTS TO SEE STATS LOOKING AT RACE, ETHNICITY, AGE, INCOME, AND MORE!



## **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 SEPTEMBER**

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**PARTIES- 47 PARTIES**

**FITNESS CENTER USE- 365 INDIVIDUALS**

**FITNESS CLASSES- 16 CLASSES**

**SERENITY HOUSE- 270 INDIVIDUALS**

**FULL BUILDING RENTAL- 8 GROUPS**

**WALK-INS- 308 INDIVIDUALS**

**SCHOOL & HOME SCHOOL GROUPS- 250 INDIVIDUALS**

**SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS- 99 INDIVIDUALS**





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

## **MISSIONARY HIGHLIGHT: Jana Lee** CBF Field Personnel | Public Health Liaison | Larnaca, Cypress



The Mission's Committee is so very pleased to welcome our newest missionary, Jana Lee. Jana is serving in Larnaca, Cyprus partnering with All4Aid. Cyprus is currently the largest per capita population of asylum seekers, with the number of refugees increasing significantly over the past five years. All4Aid is working with the refugees and asylees by way of Non-Food items (NFI) Distribution Programs, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programs, Food Security Programs, and Education/Workshop Programs. Jana will be working to develop health education programs to improve health outcomes of the refugees staying in camps.



### **WAYS TO PRAY:**

- Collaboration with local community to create and promote health education programs which will lead to improved health outcomes
- Cooperation and collaboration between refugee agencies, churches, and community organizations
- Relationships formed and health services provided and accepted among the immigrant community.

Your gifts given to the Faces & Places Missions Campaign many years ago still bear fruit every year! Jana will have ministry support funding for the next three years and the prayers of our church. We look forward to more collaboration and updates in the future with Jana Lee and this new ministry.

Also, if you're wondering, yes Jana is the sister to Jeff Lee serving in North Macedonia. The Lee family is doing a mighty work in our world. Please continue to pray for all of our Field Personnel serving around the world. Remember Alicia and Jeff Lee serving in North Macedonia. Pray for our Field Personnel serving in South East Asia. Lift up in prayer Lauren and David Bass serving in Cambodia. God is at work all around the world and our support of these dear people help us connect to the global presence of God!! Stop and lift these servants up in prayer right now while you are reading this edition of FirstWords.



# MY SUMMER IN THAILAND

*Brookley Baker*

This past summer, Brookley Baker, one of our very active college students had the opportunity to travel and minister in Thailand. We are so thankful for how God uses our college students to change the world.

This summer, I saw an array of life in Thailand and participated in various forms of missions in Thailand through ACU's World Wide Witness program. For my first three weeks, I was in Chiang Mai, a large city in northern Thailand surrounded by mountains. I built relationships with members of the church where I stayed and helped lead two summer camp experiences for Karen refugee university students. The students learned Biblical concepts like the Trinity, how giving is better than receiving, prayer, memorizing Scripture, and the power of a Father's love. At the end of the week, students wrote a reflection explaining their favorite lesson and how it related to their life. The goal of these Friendship weeks was for every student to move closer to God, whatever their relationship with God looked like at the beginning of the week.

For my second three weeks, I was in a small town called Kranuan in northeast Thailand. I lived with a family who lead a church and I taught English at the local public school to invite students to church events. The students were overjoyed to have Americans at their school, and some students would come to the church after school to play games or teach each other songs. My time at the public school helped bridge the school, including the Buddhist principal, with the Christian church. While I could provide English lessons and a smiling face, the love and hospitality I received from the Kranuan community gave me a deeper understanding of loving strangers and welcoming foreigners. A few of my favorite memories include having a mud fight with the Kranuan children after working in the rice fields, teaching Karen refugee students how to make apple pie, and the many tearful and heartfelt goodbyes I shared.

Throughout my trip, I enjoyed learning about cultural differences and how they impact a Thai's Christian faith. One example is that Thais quote Matthew 6:11, "Give us this day, our daily rice," as they eat rice, not bread, with every meal, including breakfast (it was weird at first, but I adapted quickly). It was beautiful to see people connect with God across national and cultural boundaries and gain a deeper understanding of love and hospitality through their actions. I am ever grateful for the support of FBC and its members who made this experience possible. Thank you for being a church who supports God's work through people like me and shows Christ's love and hospitality in Abilene and beyond.



# TRUNK OR Treat

**Wednesday, October 25  
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.**

The temperatures may not make it feel like it is time for us to be planning for Trunk or Treat, but whether we are having fall weather or not, it is time for our annual event. We will be enjoying Trunk or Treat whether it is warm or cold on Wednesday, October 25, from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. in the south parking lot. We are hoping to have around 30 trunks with games and candy, will be giving fun train rides, and will also be serving free hot dogs!

This is always a fun night as we see the cars that are decorated so cute, as well as the many costumes which 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 had a great time representing FBC at the ACU tailgate on September 16. We gave away over 500 Hawaiian ham and cheese sandwiches and had some good conversations.



**OCTOBER 14**



**OCTOBER 28**

*We have 2 upcoming tailgates.  
We'd love for you to be a part!*



# THE WEDNESDAY THING

Please join us for more interesting and informative programs for "The Wednesday Thing." We will be meeting every Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. in Room 112. Below you will find the schedule for October.

## **OCTOBER 4, 4:00 P.M. ROOM 112**

Dr. Trista Bailey will be presenting a program on current trends in pharmaceutical medicine. She is with the Texas Tech School of Pharmacy.

## **OCTOBER 11, 4:00 P.M. ROOM 112**

Officer Carye Adkins, with the Abilene Police Department, will be discussing ways to prevent scams from occurring.

## **OCTOBER 18, 4:00 P.M. ROOM 112**

Katy Gore, a local Elder Law attorney, will discuss a wide range of topics concerning Wills and Trusts.

## **OCTOBER 25, 4:00 P.M. ROOM 112**

Ken Lyle, Jr. will begin a two-week Bible study.

***Looking forward to seeing  
you at these events!***

# 50+ MEMBERS

On September 17 during the morning worship service, we honored those who have been members of the church for 50+ years. We are so blessed to have members who have been committed to serving God through First Baptist Church for all these years. But, as with any statistical endeavor, we apparently left a few people off! This was obviously not done intentionally, but was still an error on our part. Where the confusion mainly occurs is with people who were members of the church, left for a time period, and then came back. Another group is those who married and were originally members under their maiden name and we did not know that information. Either way, our computer system can only have one start date and that would be when the person came back and joined the church again. So, if someone had been a member prior to coming back, those years are not counted UNLESS they tell us. As with many on the original list, there are multiple dates recorded and thus the total was counted towards the 50+ mark. This situation happened this year with Janis Altom; though living in Tennessee she and Bill continue to participate electronically in Men's Prayer Breakfast, Bible study, and morning worship.

So, if you fall into this category, then please contact Jeannie Wesley, 325-675-8107 or [Jeannie.wesley@fbcabilene.org](mailto:Jeannie.wesley@fbcabilene.org) and give her the additional information for our records.





# NIGHT OF WORSHIP

OCTOBER 1 | 6 PM

*featuring*  
**Sanctuary Choir &  
Celebration Orchestra**

## October

- 1 Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs
- 5 Blessed Family Fun Night @ FLC
- 7 FBC Night @ Zoo
- 8 Personnel Committee Meeting  
Foundation Meeting
- 11 Buildings/Grounds  
Committee Meeting
- 15 Missions Committee Meeting
- 17 City Light Board Meeting  
Finance Committee Meeting  
Deacons' Meeting
- 25 Trunk or Treat

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

October 1, 9 years  
**Maria Veracruz**  
GLO Teacher

October 1, 5 years  
**Allie Tobin**  
GLO Director

October 1, 4 years  
**Raul Garcia**  
Custodian

October 3, 1 year  
**Rachel Kelley**  
GLO Teacher

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

*September 2023*

<b>Budget</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Required	\$ 257,060	\$ 2,409,540
Given	\$ 224,222	\$ 2,135,974

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



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
CHURCH • ABILENE

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