



# FIRSTWORDS

## STEWARDSHIP

During the month of October, we are going to talk a lot about stewardship. The goal is not to bash people over the head or shower them with shame, but rather to simply talk about what God designed for people to stay in a right relationship with Him. There are several things the Bible teaches us about keeping that relationship pure and on track. When pressed, Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.' (Deuteronomy 6:5) 38 This is the first and most important commandment. 39 And the second is like it. 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' (Leviticus 19:18) 40 Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40. Jesus simply stated that IF we are totally committed to God in every area of our lives AND we love others as much as we love ourselves, then everything else will fall in line. However, Jesus went on to teach through parables about how we struggle with certain issues and areas of our lives.

One of the subjects Jesus spoke about most often about is money. It is not number one, but 11 of the 39 parables have money as the subject. So, why do you think Jesus made this such a priority? I believe it has to do with the fact that money is such a driving force in all of our lives that until we get that area under control, it will overshadow all other areas of our lives.

It is interesting that Jesus does not talk about tithing, He just assumed that people would

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be doing it, so it was not a question of if, but how and why. Jesus was more concerned about the motivation than the amount. Jesus knew that everything man had came from God, so returning a portion for Kingdom work would not only accomplish Kingdom work, but it would keep man's heart in a right relationship with God if the gift was given willingly and even sacrificially. Tithing is not a punishment, but rather a way to experience the blessing God intended by relying on Him for all of our needs.

# CITY LIGHT Celebration Dinner

On Thursday, September 26, 2024, City Light hosted our First Annual Celebration Dinner and Silent Auction. Our dream to raise \$10,000 to help cover operational expenses was quickly surpassed. By the end of the night, we raised over \$26,000! We are absolutely blown away with the generosity of our congregation, along with other Christians from across our community who came to celebrate with us.



Instead of numbering the dinner tables, each table was named after one of our dear neighbors. We shared stories of how their lives have been positively impacted and changed by the community and love offered through City Light staff and volunteers. It was a night of reflecting on the goodness of God to our neighbors, and the goodness of God to us as a ministry.

The generosity of everyone in attendance displayed Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father





in heaven.” As we shared about the ministry of City Light, reminiscing on transformational life change in our neighbors and in our community, we were thankful to see so many people partner with us in shining God’s light and bringing glory to our Father.

Our City Light staff is especially appreciative to the board members, youth group, college group, and other volunteers who selflessly served at our celebration dinner. Mike Coffey emceed our event, Beverley Cunningham and Greg Young provided the music, and we were all moved by the testimony of life change God has worked through Bobby Duncan.

***May we all continue to shine God’s light to our neighbors in downtown Abilene!***





# Healing Hearts

**REACHES 5,000 GIFTS**

By Cherry Curry

In September 2012, I began Healing Hearts Ministry of FBC Abilene. This ministry is a prayer shawl ministry which strives to encourage others during their time of illness, injury, death, or other difficulties. We make gifts such as knitted or crocheted shawls, throws, angels, cloths, hats, scarves, or "no-sew" fleece blankets as tangible reminders that prayers have been said for the recipient. The ladies who make these gifts pray over the gift as they are making it, and the members of our group lay their hands on each of the gifts, pray over them, and sign the card before they are prepared for delivery. When possible, we also gift people in our community and abroad who are connected to our church in some way and are going through significant health issues or have experienced great loss. Once a person has received two gifts from the ministry, we send a greeting card if they go through further difficulties.

We have 22 members in our group and would welcome anyone who is interested to come and join us. We supply the yarn, materials, and tools needed to make these gifts.

## **There are a several ways to serve in Healing Hearts Ministry:**

Many of our members use their talents to make the "prayer" gifts. Several of these ladies entered items in the West Texas Fair this year and won ribbons. Our youngest member, Heidi Dawes, entered three items in the Junior Division and won three blue ribbons and a "Best-in-Show" ribbon. Four ladies entered the Adult Division, and here are their names and placements: Sally Doss won four blue ribbons and two 4th place ribbons; Suwanee Smith won two 2nd place ribbons; Jeannie Wesley won a blue ribbon and two 4th place ribbons; and Cherry Curry won two 2nd place ribbons, three 3rd place ribbons, and two 4th place ribbons.

We also have "couriers" who deliver these gifts. Their job is to contact the recipient to arrange a time for delivery. Once a time is set up for delivery, the courier takes the gift and visits briefly to express our love and concern for them.



Another way to serve in this ministry is by working to create a scrapbook of “Thank you” notes and other memorabilia related to the one who received the prayer gift. We have had a few people through the years who have worked on creating beautiful scrapbooks documenting our ministry. We do not currently have anyone who is working on the scrapbooks, and we are starting to get behind. Could you be the one who God gifted with the talent for this need? If so, please contact Cherry Curry at 325-864-1897 and let’s talk about it.

We meet for our regular business meetings on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month. On the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, we have a “Knit-Along” which is a time to get together and work on our gifts. Sometimes, it is necessary to adjust the schedule due to holidays or months with five Thursdays. We will do our best to keep you informed about any changes in our regular schedule.

If you don’t feel led to participate in this ministry, we would still appreciate your prayers that we will be able to continue serving our church through this ministry.



# PRAYER WORKS

Prayer request cards: **149**

Request by phone or email: **12**

Prayer cards sent: **96**

# KEEPING SAFE ONLINE

By Mike Greenfield

I recently received an email from what appeared to be one of our church members. The message said:

Hi,

**I'm sorry for bothering you, I'm in a tight spot, do you order online from Amaz0n often?**

Thanks

Her name was included, but I have removed it to not bring attention to her. The tricky thing about this email was that it did show her email address at the top, but the problem was, she was not the one who actually sent it. Her email had been hacked. One simple clue for me was that Amazon was spelled with a zero for the letter o, I know she would not make that typo. But other than that typo, the email looked ok, well except for the content which did not sound like her at all.

Now, why am I telling you all of this. This church member is very involved in the life of our church and therefore has emailed many of you before. Because someone has hacked her email, they have sent this message to lots of people in our church. I got two of the same messages. So, I wanted to alert you to this fake email and hopefully prevent you from responding and getting hooked into thinking you were helping her when that would not be the case.

Now, I am not an expert on any of this but have had to clean up several "messes" for friends and family, so here are a few things I have learned about being safe online.

**1.** If what you read seems too good to be true, then it probably is! They don't give away iPads, iPhones, Gym equipment, Playground equipment, tools, etc. for free or a huge, reduced cost! They simply want your information and will try every "bait" they can think of to "hook" you into giving them your information.

**2.** ALWAYS, I repeat, ALWAYS think before you click. Read number 1 again, and then wait a minute and ask yourself if this is something you really think is real. If so, then click and fill out the information to your heart's content, but remember, you have been warned!

**3.** Is the email address attached to the email an address you recognize? It might say Mike Greenfield, but if the address is honeyboy2299@email.ru (I just made that up, so don't try to use it!) then it is not Mike Greenfield.



4. If the email address matches the person, but the content does not look, sound, feel, like something they would send, then it probably did not come from them, and you need to be cautious. Call them and ask before responding.
5. NEVER, I repeat, NEVER give your account numbers (bank, credit card, social security, driver's license) to someone who asks for it over the phone unless you have initiated the conversation and are positive you are talking to a legitimate person at a legitimate company. Even if they seem legit, if they start pressuring you to give up information, then end the conversation and find a way to contact the company by a different means and go from there.
6. If you get a "pop-up" screen on your computer, phone, tablet, or iPad, that tells you that you have been hacked and need to click or call a certain company. DO NOT click or call. That is a scam, and you need to get someone to help you get rid of it. Clicking on the X at the top is not always a safe way to do it because they want you to click anywhere on the screen and trigger contact with them. So, ask for help!
7. As real as it might sound, government agencies do not call you and inform you that you have been compromised. They do not call and ask you to verify information over the phone. They do not tell you to "not talk to anyone about the matter or to not contact your bank." If in doubt, always hang up and ask for help. IF there is a legitimate reason for the FTC, FBI, ATF, or any other alphabet government agency to contact you, ask which office they work from and then you call that office by looking up the phone number yourself and not calling the number they give you. Once you contact the office, if they are for real, then the person at that office can direct your call.
8. The pastors and staff at First Baptist Church will NEVER email or call asking you to send them gift cards or order something on amazon. When there are ways for you to participate in giving or helping a specific cause, it will be sent through the normal church publications, not individual emails.

This is not an exhaustive list, nor does it cover all the creative ways "bad" people have figured out how to entice you to do what they want. So, be careful out there and if in doubt, trust your doubt!



# THOUGHTS ON TITHING

by Paul Schnitman

Some of you have heard me talk about tithing, but it is worth saying it again. The main reason Donna and I tithe is because God calls us to be faithful in our giving back to Him.

Donna and I believe tithing helps us become stronger not only in our faith, but it makes us spiritually stronger! It is one part of our spiritual growth. God has always provided for us, even in financial hardships. Once we understood why we should tithe, we have never stopped. We have increased our percentage of income over the years for the simple reason that we are convinced God wants us to step out further in faith. Faith that He will provide for us. It's difficult to describe what that means or what that looks like, but I can only say that it is true. We have experienced it over our over almost 40 years of tithing what God seems to push us to do.

I always tell people who ask me about tithing that if you truly seek God's direction, somehow, He will move you toward what He wants your tithe to be. I'm convinced He wants us to have faith that He will provide. **My advice is to tithe FIRST, then pay your bills.** That requires faith!

For those who have never heard my

testimony...we began tithing about three years after we were married. I was asked to lead a plan to build a children's building for the newly formed church we were attending at that time. That meant I was to ask the church family to give towards this project. We were not tithing at the time. I was selling life insurance on straight commissions. We had purchased a new house and had a large house payment. I remember I was sitting in my chair one morning where I had my time in studying the Bible, and I prayed to God about leading this project. God planted on my heart that we need to start tithing. I said to God...*we can barely pay our bills, so how am I going to afford to tithe AND give to this project?* God convicted me right then. It was like He said *trust Me!* I can't explain it any other way. I had never experienced a conviction like that. So, I said out loud... *OK, God but you are going to have to provide money for our bills!*

We have never looked back. We tithe first always!

The joy in giving has been unbelievable, and we have been fortunate to be part of a church since 1992 that has done MANY great things to help people in this city, around this state and the world because of those who faithfully give tithes to God. God has ALWAYS provided for our church,



and I believe He always will. We have difficult times, but He always provides.

I believe we fail many times because we don't trust God enough. We rely on our own thinking and abilities too much. We must trust God, have faith in Him, and do our part. That "part" is living a life pleasing to God and give back to Him from the financial blessings He has given us. EVERYTHING we have financially came from Him in my mind.

Malachi 3:8 states, *"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' In tithes and offerings." Then, in verse 9 "...You are under a curse – you whole nation – because you are robbing me."*

Read Malachi 3:10 on your own. As a body of Christ, we need to test God as He says and bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. I think God is waiting to do even greater things through our church until we do what He says in those verses.

# The Wednesday Thing for October

4:00 in the Chapel

## October 9

Mindi Bannister,  
Education & Family Care Specialist,  
Abilene Alzheimer's Association

Mindi will discuss support programs and resources available for patients, family members, and care partners.

## October 16

Dr. Barry Moak

Barry will help us explore, in a limited concise way, one of the health areas of most concern, especially to seniors: the brain. How does the brain work? What is and is not dementia? What about stroke? How can we keep the brain healthy? It will be fun!

## October 23

Todd Wilson

Voted top 10 best Hymns

## October 30

Sherri Statler,  
President/CEO of Christian Homes  
and Family Services

# COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

On Tuesday, September 24, our church held a women's Coffee & Conversation event, and despite our busy lives, a group of women came together on the third floor to share laughs, stories, and encouragement. Many of us had hesitations—juggling work, family commitments, and countless other responsibilities made it easy to skip this gathering. But, we decided to prioritize connection, and it turned out to be a really meaningful time .

As we settled in with our cups of coffee and yummy snacks, we shared stories about our week, our struggles, and our “can't believe that happened” moments. Conversations flowed naturally, touching on everything from parenting challenges to cemetery vaults...(this is true). It was refreshing to step away from our hectic schedules and simply be present with one another.

We found a space where we could all relate and support one another. The laughter and stories shared strengthened our sense of community, reminding us how important it is to lean on each other.

By the end of the night, we left feeling uplifted and blessed. The event reminded us of the importance of nurturing our relationships within the church. Even amidst our busy lives, carving out time for connection is truly worthwhile. We hope to see more women join us next time, as each voice and story adds to the beautiful tapestry of our women's ministry. Let's continue to prioritize these moments of fellowship; they nourish our souls and strengthen our bonds.

**JENNIFER WOODARD**  
Church Member





# MENS MINISTRY



**FBC Men's Ministry hosted the tailgate at a McMurry football game.**



## SAVE THE DATE

**Men's Ski Trip  
February 27 -  
March 2**





# COLLEGE MINISTRY



Back to school is always a busy time! Here is a snapshot of what's been going on.

**HSU move in and Cookout**

**ACU Fest & Church Fair**

**Hosted McMurry Football and Volleyball teams in worship and lunch**

**College Department Lunch**









# CITY LIGHT

Community Ministries

**6,550**

## MEALS SERVED

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

**600**

## VOLUNTEER HOURS

Personal Assistance:

**663**

## WALK-INS

for assistance

**311**

## MAIL

Delivered and checked

**227**

## SHOWERS



## UPDATE ON



What a blessing it was to open our doors and hearts to our first guest at Houses For Healing, Carl. He was such a joy, and it touched our hearts to hear what he loved about staying here—the cozy house, his favorite blue recliner, and the warmth of the people who took the time to get to know him.



A heartfelt thank you to Dina Griffin, Marsha and David Lovelady for providing meals, Donna Schnitman for the delicious sweets, and Karen Dansby for doing his laundry. We're also grateful to Corrie and Barry Moak for cleaning the house after his stay.

It truly takes a village, and our church always steps up. Thank you, First Baptist, for being such a loving, caring community.



# FLC

## Family Life Center

### 37 PARTY PACKAGES

### FITNESS CENTER USE

311 Individuals

11 New Members

### 14 FITNESS CLASSES

### SERENITY HOUSE

306 Individuals

### FULL BUILDING RENTAL

13 Groups

### 278 WALK-INS

### 5 SCHOOL GROUP

157 Students

### 9 SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

83 Individuals

### 1 HOME SCHOOL GROUP

25 Students

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.



# OCTOBER

- 6** Personnel Committee Meeting  
Zoo Night
- 9** Buildings & Grounds  
Committee Meeting
- 11-13** College Fall Retreat/Sky Ranch
- 13** Men's BYO Steak Night
- 15** Finance Committee Meeting  
Deacons' Meeting
- 16** GLO Board Meeting
- 20** Lord's Supper  
Foundation Board Meeting  
Missions' Committee Meeting
- 21** MOCE Board Meeting
- 23** Hospital Visitation Team  
Church Conference
- 27** Senior Adult Recognition in  
worship  
Budget Committee
- 30** Trunk or Treat  
No other Wednesday night  
activities

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

October 1, 10 years  
**MARIA VERARUZ**  
*GLO Teacher*

October 1, 6 years  
**ALLIE TOBIN**  
*GLO Director*

October 1, 5 years  
**RAUL GARCIA**  
*Custodian*

October 30, 1 year  
**NANCY ZAVALA**  
*GLO Teacher*

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

September 2024

<b>Budget</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Required	\$339,010	\$2,678,190
Given	\$250,697	\$2,449,263

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



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
CHURCH ♦ ABILENE

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