



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 do in order 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 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 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 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 has comes 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 our needs.

Dear FBC Family,

What a great start to the fall we have already experienced. We are continuing to see God draw people to our church, especially college students! Each Sunday, we set up a guest table to meet and greet visitors to our church. Usually, we have around 6-8 bags of information available, along with a couple of swag items such as a coffee mug. The past three Sundays, we have either run out or nearly run out of prepared bags because so many guests have approached the table. What an incredible problem to have! Most of those guests have been college students who not only want the bag, but are interested in an authentic church experience during their university years. When you see Hunter and Kelsey Brown, encourage them in the work they are doing with these university students.

Speaking of Kelsey Brown, we are in the process of ordaining Kelsey to the Gospel Ministry. Kelsey (and Hunter) approached me last fall about this possibility. She has had about a decade of ministry relationship at our church, first as a youth intern, then as the interim youth minister, and currently as the Baptist Student Ministries Director at ACU, as well as working with our college kids here at First Baptist. I went to the deacons' officers to see if we had a process for ordination at FBC and was told that we do not. So, they let me create one, which the deacons passed last fall, and Kelsey is now following. First, the pastor presents the candidate for ordination to the deacons to affirm whether to enter the ordination process. Next, after the deacons affirm this, the candidate writes a theological paper outlining their views on different theological subjects such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of the Bible, and the doctrine of the church. That paper is then presented to the ordination committee made up of six ordained ministers or deacons chosen by the candidate, and six chosen by the pastor and deacon chair. The council is given the paper to review, and then a time of examination is set. After a thorough examination of the ordination candidate by the



council, the council brings a recommendation to the church to ordain the candidate. This can be either a special-called meeting or a regularly scheduled meeting. After the church then affirms the candidate's calling and ordination, a service of ordination to the Gospel Ministry will follow at a later date to be determined by the candidate and pastor. Kelsey has been affirmed by the deacons, written her paper, and has been thoroughly examined by the ordination council on September 20, 2026. We will be presenting her for church affirmation at our regularly scheduled business meeting in November, and then setting a date for the ordination service (assuming the vote goes well!). Kelsey is doing a wonderful job living out the call of God on her life. She is someone our church will be proud to ordain!

Coming up sermon series-wise, in October we will be studying the family of Jacob. We are calling the series Healing Families: Brokenness and Forgiveness in the Family of God. Jacob's family has long fascinated me as we see the hand of God often working behind the scenes and through heartache and brokenness to bless and save many lives. Then, in November, we are doing a series called God's Mission, Our Partnership. We will be emphasizing and promoting our Unified Missions offering, which goes to four different partnerships: CBF Global, Abilene Community Development, Texas Baptist Hunger Initiative, and Baptist World Alliance. We will culminate this on November 22 with Carry the Light Sunday and Thanksgiving Dinner, where we will be showing how God has worked globally through our church this year. Yes, Carry the Light is earlier this year than in years past. Here is why: Carry the Light used to be paired with the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. In fact, it was a WMU group who started the parade of flags with Carry the Light. To return Carry the Light to its original intent of being paired with the missions offering, we are moving it back to November 22 to tell the story of the Mission of God in the world and our partnership within that mission. Pray about how you can participate in God's Mission.

Grace and Peace,

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



The Sisters' Table



SMALL SEED, BIG FAITH

Faith means trusting God during the times when we do not know how He will answer our prayers, when the answer will come, or what tomorrow will bring.

Faith says, "I may not see the answer, but I know God is working." It is choosing to follow Christ, even when we cannot see what comes next.

We put our faith into action by praying, forgiving, waiting, trusting, and believing. We all face giants...family troubles, financial worries, loneliness, broken relationships, difficult decisions, changes, and unanswered prayers. We must continue to have faith when the answer does not come quickly, when it is not the answer we wanted, or even when the answer is no.

We were blessed to have 24 ladies in attendance. Together, we sang "Faith as Small as a Mustard Seed" and created beautiful sand art crosses as a reminder that even the smallest amount of faith can grow into something meaningful.

Our faith does not have to start big; it simply needs to be placed in the right hands. A small seed can grow into big faith!





CELEBRATING OVER 30 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

It is with great appreciation and gratitude that we celebrate Marilyn Henderson and her incredible 30+ years of dedicated service to GLO Day Care.

For more than three decades, Marilyn has been an important part of the GLO family. Her commitment, dependability, kindness, and love for the children have made a lasting impact on generations of families who have walked through our doors.

Marilyn has been a driving force behind the daily environment at GLO, helping create a place where children are cared for, supported, and loved. Her years of service represent countless children, families, teachers, and memories that have helped shape GLO Day Care into the program it is today.

We are especially thankful for the knowledge and experience Marilyn brings to our team. Her dedication is a wonderful example of what it means to serve children and families with a caring heart.

Marilyn, thank you for giving more than 30 years of your life to GLO Day Care. Your hard work, loyalty, and dedication have made a difference which will continue to be felt for many years to come.

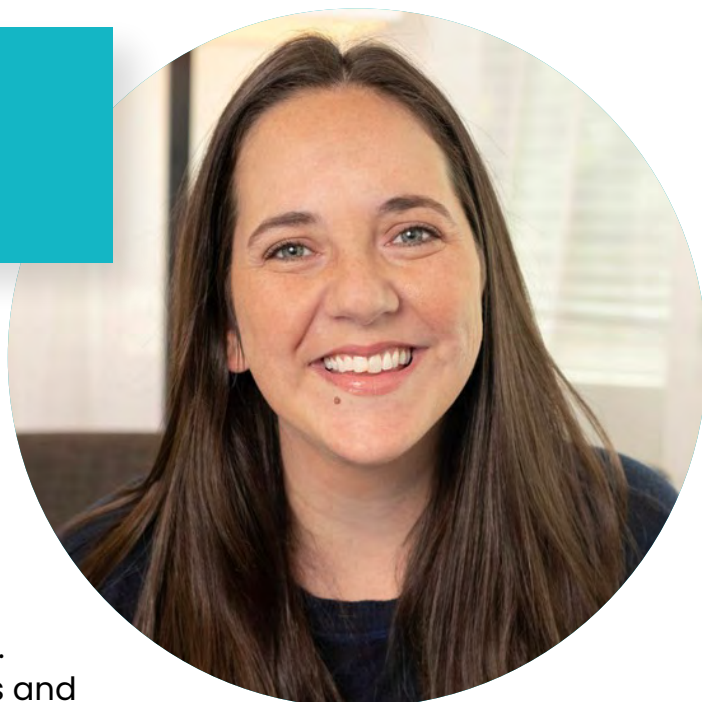
We are blessed to have you as part of the GLO family and are so grateful for everything you have done, and continue to do for GLO Day Care.

With heartfelt appreciation,

ALLIE TOBIN
Director, GLO Day Care

Counselor Spotlight:

SARAH CHISOLM MILLER



Hi there!

As you may know, my name is Sarah Chisolm Miller, and I am one of the newest members of the Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment (MOCE). My personal journey into the professional therapeutic space, while long and winding, officially began in August of 2020.

That's right, I went back to school after 15 years and 5 babies, in the middle of a pandemic, homeschooling a 2nd grader, and running after two toddlers. What was I thinking?! Not even 8 months into my 24-month long program, I discovered we were expecting our surprise bookend baby, which meant my 2-year program quickly became a 3-year program. Nevertheless, I persisted, with the help of an incredible partner and an amazing girl gang and graduated from Belmont University with my degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, with concentrations in Marriage and Family Therapy and Clinical Pastoral Therapy, in August of 2023.

During my internship and 1st year practicing as a therapist, I was blessed to work at the nationally renowned Refuge Center for Counseling in Franklin, Tennessee. Then in the spring of 2024, I transferred to a top group practice in Nashville, known as Sage Hill Counseling. Let me tell you, I fully intended to retire at Sage Hill. The depths of clinical wisdom and professional relationships were beyond life-giving and I will forever count myself lucky to have been a member of both The Refuge and Sage Hill's counseling teams.

While leaving my job in Nashville was one of the more difficult choices in moving to Abilene, I have been pleasantly surprised by the thoughtful leadership and wealth of knowledge found in the therapists at the MOCE. Even though I have only been a part of the MOCE team for a handful of weeks, I look forward with great anticipation for all that is to come under the continued and new leadership of Elya Whitten and Patti Blue, and wise guidance of therapeutic giants like Jennifer Smothermon.

While I see adult (and the occasional teenage) clients for a wide range of clinical issues and areas of concern, there are a few populations I specialize in working with. Personally, I find a lot of energy and professional life in working with couples in crisis or dealing with issues around communication in partnered relationships. I also specialize in working with formerly diagnosed or not yet diagnosed neurodivergent individuals.

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term that covers 30+ different neuro-wirings. Everything from Autism, OCD, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, to a vast grouping of learning disabilities and more. We live in a culture that is built for the neurotypical mind and learning to thrive as a neurodivergent individual in a neurotypical world is a communal, not individual, undertaking. I hold a strong belief that we were likely created by a creative, neurodivergent Trinity and therefore the neurodivergent wiring doesn't need fixing. At the same time, understanding how your brain and nervous system work is vital, and can often be life-saving information and education, as it can be a struggle learning to navigate systems that are often black and white, when an individual might see the world in a multitude of unique colors, sounds, and shapes.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this work is helping individuals realize they already possess everything they need inside of themselves. I may provide tools or reframe here and there, but more often than not, the individuals sitting in my office have simply forgotten how to integrate the many pieces of themselves which come together to create a congruent, wise, wonderful version of who they truly are.

I've learned that there are many rules, regulations, etc. that are different from Tennessee to Texas. Goodness, that has been a masters-level education on its own! One thing I am happy to understand is my ability to sit with First Baptist Church members in a professional capacity, which I was initially under the impression would not be possible.

Outside of the therapy room, you would likely see me with my girls, husband, father, and friends. Community is very important to me, and I love being with my people. You would also be likely to catch my crew and I singing Broadway musicals, quoting lines from all nerd-culture films, or hoping no one talks to me as I'm surely on the best part of my current book of choice.

Inside my therapy room, you'll find a warm and welcoming professional who will always be rooting for you and will never stop believing in your ability to show up to life in the whole and healed way you dream of.

Be Well,

Sarah Chisolm Miller

Ministry Spotlight:

CITY LIGHT

Community Ministries

SUNDAY BREAKFAST: 991

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST: 897

COMMUNITY LUNCH: 2,431

PRODUCE: 963

VOLUNTEER HOURS: 893

SHOWERS: 257

CLOTHING ITEMS: 582

CALLS AND VOICEMAILS: 528

MAIL CHECKS: 362

FRONT DESK WALK-INS: 3,448

DINING ROOM WALK-INS: 2,740



WALKING ALONGSIDE OUR NEIGHBORS

City Light is blessed to have Pastor Darwin, from Samaritan's Touch Homeless Services, volunteer with us regularly. He prays and visits with our neighbors, shares sermons, and assists with baptisms on the last Sunday of each month when needed. We are grateful to have him serving alongside John Moore. What a blessing it is to pray with someone, watch them receive Christ, and celebrate as they are baptized!



Wednesday Night Meals

This fall, we decided to try something different with our Wednesday night meals. The idea came out of our pastoral staff meeting and one that is not new, because it has been used by many churches to accomplish exactly what we are talking about. But it does take a group of committed volunteers for it to succeed.

So, what I proposed to a few folks was that we develop four teams, and have each team be responsible for one meal a month. The team would either “cook” the meal or simply be responsible for serving the meal if the food items were purchased, not prepared (i.e. fried chicken). They would also help with a scaled-down salad bar and have everything ready to be served at 5:00 p.m.

We have successfully gone through the four-meal rotation, because we have had some amazing volunteers come and take charge! My thanks goes out to: Jill Harris, Brenda Stuteville, Debbie Langford who are helping with the Mexican meal; Connie Peacock and Pam Nicholas who are helping with the Italian meal; Phil Brown and a long list of men who are a part of the Men’s Ministry and are doing the Hamburger meal; and then a few extra helpers (some church staff and Donna Schnitman on the first night) who are helping with the Fried Chicken meal. Of course, we still have our faithful volunteers in Delbert and Aletta Allred and Delores Poynor who help with all the other things which are needed to get the meal ready and then they help serve the food.

So, if you have not been to a Wednesday night meal this fall, you are missing out!



Join us for Trunk or Treat!

October 28
5:30–7 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 28, from 5:30–7 p.m. in the south parking lot. We are planning to have at least 24 trunks with games and candy, fun train rides, as well as serving a free hot dog dinner!

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.

SOCKTOBER IS COMING!

We will be collecting new socks throughout the month of October for our neighbors at City Light. The socks will be distributed during the cold winter months to help keep our neighbors warm.

Please drop off your donations at City Light or contact Beth Young at beth.young@fbcaillene.org or 325-675-8187.

**Thank you for supporting
this special project!**



Stewardship Education

by Mike Greenfield

Talking about giving is a very natural part of our spiritual walk, or maybe it should be. We, as a church, believe the Bible to be the word of God and the Bible is very clear about what our relationship to our financial resources should be. We are to tithe (one tenth of our resources) to God through the local church. According to the Bible, that is the starting point. The Bible also talks about offerings which are also given to specific causes at specific times for specific reasons. Those are separate and above the tithe. Then there is support given to other worthy causes God brings into our paths. These are worthwhile and many of them are Christ-centered and do great Kingdom work. So, as you think about your tithe, offerings, and support, here are some thoughts that might help.

Giving Options to Consider

In the fast paced, high technological world we live in, writing a check and putting it in an envelope seems totally foreign to many of us now. But here at the church, we have used the same tried and true system of offering envelopes for folks to have an easy way to give their tithes and offerings for the support of the ministry budget. So as technology changes, so should the church change to keep up with what people are doing in other areas of their lives.

Online giving is not entirely new to what we have been offering as a way to give. On the church website, www.fbcabilene.org, there is a link on the top row of options that takes you to the giving page for the church. The link is in a green box and says "Give Online." Simply click on this link and it will walk you through the process. Of course, by using this method it requires a credit or debit card, both of which have a 2.2% fee associated with it and are hoping that folks will include that in their thinking as they use this method.

Another option is to set up a bank draft that would take a set amount out of your account and put in the church account on a set time frame. This option does not have any associated fees and takes out the "remember to do it" factor. Jeannie Jowers in the finance office can help you set this up or answer questions you might have. This is really convenient when you are travelling or want to simplify your life.

Gifts That Keep On Giving

Regular gifts of tithes and offerings to the church are the most important forms of giving. These gifts make it possible for the church to continue to carry out the ministries of Jesus Christ at home and around the world.

However, you may have a desire to do something special and make a gift which bears fruit year after year. If so, the First Baptist Church Foundation can help you accomplish that desire. As a result of the interest expressed by some church members to make possible long-term, deferred, or special gifts for the future ministries of the church, the Foundation was established by the church in 1993. The foundation board distributes grants from the earnings twice a year for requests which meet the purpose of the foundation.



A FUN
night
AT THE
ZOO

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

October 1, 12 years

BONNIE (MARIA) VERACRUZ

GLO Teacher

October 1, 8 years

ALLIE TOBIN

GLO Director

October 1, 7 years

RAUL GARCIA

Custodian

October 27, 1 year

DYLANNE ABRAHAM

*M. A. to Director of Preschool
& Pastor for Children*

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

September 2026

<u>Budget</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Required	\$224,100	\$2,463,900
Given	\$237,186	\$2,394,839

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

OCTOBER

- 4** Next Steps Lunch
Personnel Committee Meeting
- 6** Women's Ministry Praise Night
- 7** Deacon Selection Committee Meeting
- 10** Men's Ministry Tailgate at McMurry
- 13** Craig Middle School Choir Concert
- 14** Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting
- 15** Men's Ministry Brown Bag Lunch
Madison Middle School Choir Concert
- 18** Foundation Board Meeting
Missions' Committee Meeting
- 20** CLCM Board
Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 21** Hospital Visitation Meeting
- 22-31** Cambodia Mission Trip
- 25** Lord's Supper
- 26** MOCE Board Meeting
- 27** GLO Board Meeting
- 28** Trunk or Treat



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE