

FIRSTwords

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

PENTECOST . . . THE PROMISE OF PEACE

This Sunday, June 4, is Pentecost which is one of the three major holy days of the church along with Christmas and Easter. What would our lives be like without Christmas and Easter? We would not have a God who walked with us and sympathizes with us. We would live in the dark thinking that death is the end.

Yet, what would our lives be like without Pentecost? We would be alone without the power and peace to overcome. There would be no Church without Pentecost. Pentecost is practical. There would be no Vacation Bible School without this day. You would never know the gift of peace without the giving of the Spirit on Pentecost. You would live in constant fear and defeat.

Pentecost literally means fiftieth. It was originally a Jewish holiday that celebrated the harvest fifty days after Passover. It was also the day Israel remembered the giving of the Law of Moses on Mount Sinai when the people were created into a new community.

On this Pentecost day, God did something new which Jesus had promised. All heaven broke loose as God's Spirit poured down in wind and fire to create the Church. People from different countries, with different languages, and deep differences understood each other like never before (read Acts 2:1-21). Can you see how this divided world needs Pentecost?

It is tragic that Pentecost does not receive the attention it deserves. It is easier to celebrate Christmas when we give gifts and decorate the tree. It is hard to picture new life and freedom from fear. Yet, on Pentecost, God's power and Spirit that dwelled in Jesus Christ and raised him from the dead now dwells in us. Jesus said, "He would not orphan us or leave us alone." Pentecost is the day in which that promise comes true. Even though Jesus ascends to the Father, by and with His Spirit, we will never be alone.

This Sunday we will focus on John's version of Pentecost (John 20:19-23). There is no fire or wind, but we are all still encouraged to wear red or orange to give witness to the power of the Spirit. In John's account the power that was let loose in Acts comes in the form of His gift of peace. In this passage the disciples were hiding behind locked doors out of fear. What fears are you trying to lock out yet keep pounding on the door? Pentecost provides the peace and power to face and overcome any fear.

PENTECOST
JUNE 4, 2017

***Wear Red or
Orange to
Celebrate***

JUNE 2017



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words

FOR THE JOURNEY

Dr. Phil Christopher
Senior Pastor

FROM WEARINESS TO GREEN PASTURES

What are your travel plans this summer? I hope you will get away for a time of refreshment. I will suggest a must-stop for you to visit this summer that is probably not on your itinerary or summer plans.

When our family travels, we over-pack. If we fly, we stagger through terminals even though the suitcases are on rollers. In his book, *Traveling Lighter*, Max Lucado says, "It isn't just our over-stuffed luggage, but the spiritual load we drag around. We haul around fear, guilt, shame, worry, and discontent to name a few of our burdens." Perhaps the greatest sickness of our time is weariness.

Let me tell you a story from Tracy whom I had never met. I had accompanied Mary for her visit to the doctor. Tracy saw me in the waiting room and this is what she wrote to me in May, 2015.

I saw you on Friday. You were in the entry way on the phone when I walked in. Immediately, the Lord laid something on my heart. At first I didn't recognize you, but then I heard your voice from watching the morning show on KTAB. It wasn't until they called you back to be with your wife that I realized who you were. But it was long before that I felt so strongly that God wanted me to share something with you.

When you came back to the waiting room, the word that first came to my heart was weary and dry. Sometimes the Lord gives me pictures. I saw a vast desert, the ground was cracked and incredibly dry and thirsty. You were there and you bore an incredible burden. I felt like the Lord told me you are carrying a heavy burden right now that has left you weary. I could even feel the weightiness of it myself. God's love and compassion for you is amazing and I could see a picture of the Father loving you as His child.

The Lord told me he (you) are in a season that has left you weary from carrying this burden. But be ready the Lord is taking you into a new season with fresh passion, vision, and perspective...I felt like the Lord said all things will become new as you continue to trust Him. I saw the Lord has a beautiful valley and meadow that He has prepared for you...The Lord is giving you fresh eyes to see His heart, fresh ears to hear His voice. He is raising you up into a new season.

The rest of the story. The next month, I went with our youth to camp in Colorado. I climbed with them on a trail that led us to this magnificent meadow resting between the mountains - a green pasture. Tears filled my eyes as I remembered the prophecy of Tracy and God's new season.

God wants to lead you into a new season this summer. You can unload the burdens. This summer during worship, we will travel to green pastures, still waters, and through dark valleys to the high country. I hope you will invite someone to worship this summer who needs to find a new season and green pastures. Perhaps you are like me that day in the doctor's office needing a fresh perspective and word from the Lord for your weariness. I pray this summer you will travel lighter and include a visit to the 23rd Psalm. Aren't you tired of feeling weary?

Brave Journey,

Phil

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths, because of his name's sake. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

the PATH to PEACE

SUMMER SERMON SERIES

The Power and Peace of the 23rd Psalm

June 11	Rest for Weariness Psalm 23:2 <i>with Children's Sermon</i>
June 18	Father's Day - Steve Queen, Ministry of Counseling, Preaching
June 25	Soul Medicine: Restoration of Our Souls Psalm 23:3
July 2	C.V. Blake, Pastor for Adults, Preaching
July 9	No Fear: A Way to the High Country Psalm 23:4, <i>with Children's Sermon</i>
July 16	Mike Coffey, Deacon and Pastor, Preaching
July 23	The Snake of Shame & Poison of Perfectionism Psalm 23:5
July 30	Who is Following You? Psalm 23:6a
August 6	Meredith Stone, Professor Logsdon Seminary, Preaching
August 13	Can You Imagine What is Ahead? Psalm 23:6b, <i>with Children's Sermon</i>

FBC POOL PARTY

Sunday, June 11 at 6:00 p.m. Hardin Simmons Pool

We have already gotten off to a fast start this summer and we are ready to slow down just a bit and spend a Sunday evening relaxing and enjoying a burger and maybe a swim. We invite you to join us on Sunday, June 11 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hardin Simmons pool. The church will be providing hamburgers, chips, cookies, and drinks. Feel free to bring your own lawn chairs or blankets and don't forget your towel if you are planning on swimming. Our party will end at 8:30 p.m. so come and relax by the pool for a couple of hours and enjoy some great conversations with our church community!



SEEING OUR GOD IN HIS CREATION

by Rick Hammer

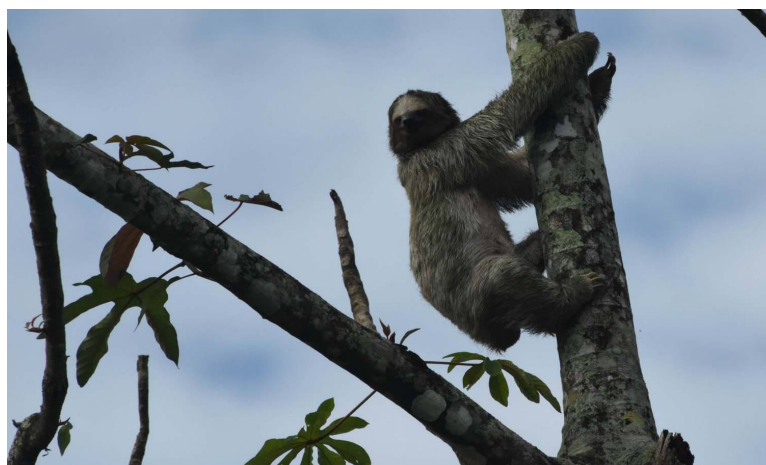
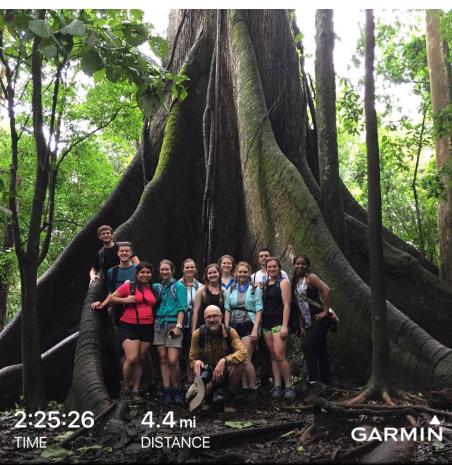
It's hard to believe, but we are in the middle of spring with summer fast approaching! Seems like our church body was celebrating Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Christ's Resurrection only yesterday. For me personally, spring means two things. First, spring—and more importantly Easter Sunday—is a time of Spiritual Renewal as I am reminded that I worship the Son of a God who paid the ultimate price for my sins. The other wonderful blessing that spring brings is a change of season that I like to think of as an earthly Creational Renewal of God's Creation. This Creational Renewal each spring is a blessing to all of us, and if we slow down and are observant we can see God at work and can see His image, in His Creation, which we dwell in every day.

By dwelling in God's creation, I mean several things. First, to dwell means to live in a particular place. For most of us, this means Abilene and the surrounding area. Probably most of us live in an urban environment inside the city. We urban Creation dwellers tend to associate God's creation with the ubiquitous mesquite tree or maybe our fruitless mulberry tree greening up in our yard in the spring. And we should certainly give credit to our Savior Jesus Christ, through whom all things were made and "all things hold together" (Col. 1:17) even for the return of leaves and flowers on mesquite trees! The miracle of God's handiwork is evident and no less miraculous, even in the lowly mesquite.

What are some of the "miracles" that allow us to see God in the lowly mesquite? Here are just a few. How do they know that it's time to drop all their leaves in the fall and prepare the new leaf buds that will remain dormant through the winter, waiting for the exact day to resume growth and produce new leaves in the spring? Well, plants can measure the length of the night or darkness each day year-round. So, with some simple math—like subtracting the night length from 24 hours—they know just about where we are on the calendar. The leaves come first and then the flowers a few weeks later. Bet you didn't know that trees have calendars! There are probably some other factors, like temperature, they cue on as well, but you get the idea. Maybe these are miracles that only a botanist and scientist like me can appreciate, but God's Divine providence, this "holding of all things together" through his son Jesus Christ, knows no boundaries.

As I write the last words of this essay, I am sitting in my visiting professor's office in the heart of the lowland rainforest on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. I have 10 HSU students here with me to learn about tropical biology. In a place like this, the opportunities to see God's image in all the life that make up the rainforest are almost overwhelming for us native Texans. This is one reason I bring students here to the jungle, to open their eyes in a powerful way to God's Creation.

My students and I gathered this Sunday morning for a HSU-Costa Rican time of worship and time of reflection on God's rainforest handiwork, both in scripture and prayer. I shared with my students that even God's Creation praises His name: "Praise the Lord from the earth...Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars" (Ps. 148: 7-9). We did not specifically talk about mesquite trees this morning, but they too praise His name. Even the lowly mesquite tree reveals and "opens our eyes" to our Lord. We finished our worship with the song "God of Wonders" by Third Day. The first verse goes like this: "Lord of all creation, of water and sky, The heavens are your Tabernacle, Glory to the Lord on high." I felt deeply moved as we sang this praise to our God of Creation this morning. I hope my students did as well. I challenge you to look for God's image in his Creation that surrounds you and share on my [FBC Facebook page](#).



CAMP - A Change of Place and A Change of Pace

by Cody Favor

The church calendar during the summer is filled with many fun activities, but nothing combines the element of fun and growth quite like camp. We take a week to change our location and the regular pace of life so we can focus on God in a way that is out of the ordinary. This escape is a way to reset our routines with God and be awakened to all that God is already doing. Children, youth, and families all participate in camp each summer and these shared experiences connect us to God and each other.

All the elements of camp combine to make the week a great experience, but it is the shared experiences and the moments of becoming aware of God's presence in a new place that I look forward to each year. Our young people look forward to this as well. Last year on the way to camp, one of our high school students brought prizes and had a raffle each hour to help the miles pass quickly. It was hilarious. On the way home, another student found a mysterious piece of ham under her seat and that has become a legendary event in the history of High School Camp. There was once a group of middle school girls who apparently had yet to get their fill of worship at camp and on the bus ride home held a worship service complete with hymns, scripture, a sermon, and communion! These weeks have also given opportunities for young people to make decisions to trust their lives to Jesus. Unlikely groups of students have prayed for each other and shared their joys and burdens together.

A tradition for our high school group is to hike to the top of Eagle Cliff Mountain each year. It is as much a climb as it is a hike, and for some it is not easy. What is special about this hike is not the views of Rocky Mountain National Park, but the way students encourage one another and celebrate together at the top. The mountain views give evidence of God, but so do the young people who love one another and live into the kingdom of God. Camp experiences are not just fun memories, but are experiences that shape us and our faith. As our young people participate in camp this summer, I pray you will encourage them in their journey and find a place in your schedule to change your place and change your pace so you might be able to connect with God in a fresh way. May each of us be aware of God's presence.



ACTING IN *Love*

MCALLEN FAMILY MISSION TRIP JULY 23 - 28

Would you be willing to participate in the second Family Mission Trip along the Texas border? FBC has another opportunity to partner and encourage Buckner's Family Hope Center just outside of McAllen, Texas. This year we need a garden bed team, exterior painting team, and a warehouse/bed team. Now is the time to sign up! The cost is \$25 plus lodging and transportation. For more information or if you would like to sign up, please contact Rebecca Hunt or John Moore in the missions' office (325-675-8112) or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org or john.moore@fbcabilene.org.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY & FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ABILENE

by John Moore

Please be in prayer for our FBC Habitat House. Our ministry project is nearing and we want you to know about some important dates.

SUNDAY, JUNE 4 – Our ceremonial start to the project will begin in your Sunday school class. Please be present in Sunday school to pray for your 2X4 and write your prayers, favorite scriptures, and name on your stud. You will need to assign a leader to take it to worship and bring it down front as an act of worship at the designated time in the morning worship service (let the missions' office know if we can arrange someone to help carry the 2x4 for your class...675-8112). Please make this celebration an important part of your worship on this day.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7 – Our Crew Leaders for the project will be trained on Wednesday at 7 p.m. in room 220. We are in great need of more Crew Leaders (someone who is willing to lead a team of volunteers to accomplish a particular construction task and learn a new skill). You will be paid in a free t-shirt and all the water you can drink.

SATURDAYS, JUNE 10 & 17 – Our first major work days in the South Parking Lot. We start at 8 a.m. and will finish at 2 p.m. that day. We need 20 -30 people willing to help begin the framing for our project. It's really important that we know if you are coming to help on this work day (we do not want to waste your time by having too many volunteers).

FUTURE DATES – Future work dates are being planned. Watch for these dates and sign up in the missions' office. Also begin recruiting your small group, Bible study class, softball team, and golf foursome to work on this project.

If you have any questions or would like to sign up, contact either Rebecca Hunt or John Moore in the missions' office (325-675-8112) or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org or john.moore@fbcabilene.org.

Thank you for being a church who cares! God is at work in our community because of you! Don't miss an opportunity to be His hands and feet!

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY UPDATE

Our Habitat for Humanity House is being built for the Mulanda Family. Bikole Mulanda and Fabiole Atonda are refugees from Africa, and have six children: Magelan, Elizabeth, Beatrice, Utanza, Riziki, and Francoise. Here is some information shared from Steven Leggett who works for Habitat for Humanity:

We had a good meeting with Bikole Mulanda and Fabiole Atonda and their 22 year old son Magelan. They informed us that their 6 year old son, Francoise, would not ever be able to navigate himself or care for himself, so there will apparently be limited accommodation for his activities. It will be necessary for the other adults who care for, bathe, and feed him. He stays in his parent's room in a hospital bed. We believe we are in good shape and well on the way to making the necessary adjustments in the house plan. The family is very excited about starting their house, and seemed amazed when we told them our goal was to finish it this summer—no promises, but a reasonable goal.

The Mulanda family will join us Sunday, June 4 for our special Habitat for Humanity emphasis service. If you are interested in helping with our Habitat for Humanity project this year, please contact Rebecca Hunt at 675-8112 or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org.



A WORD FROM MEREDITH STONE, *Interim Pastor for Emerging Adults*



I am excited to have the opportunity to serve as Interim Pastor for Emerging Adults over the next several months. My family and I have been members at FBC Abilene for over seven years. We came here after I left a ministry position as Teaching Pastor at Crosspoint Fellowship in 2009. Since then I have served as Women in Ministry Specialist with Texas Baptists, and now I am on the faculty of Logsdon School of Theology at HSU where I teach Bible and ministry classes. For the past five years, my husband James and I have been teaching the university students in Sunday school. We love having the opportunity to journey with young people in such a formative stage of their lives.

In just my first couple of weeks of serving at FBC I have met so many young adults who I didn't know previously. Many of these young women and men have found their place at FBC as a direct result of the Emerging Adults Ministry which Sarah Greenfield has worked so hard to create. It is a privilege to be entrusted with keeping this growing ministry moving forward, and it is an encouragement to know that FBC is committed to investing in people of every age and life stage.



GLO CIRCUS DAY

Come One, Come All!

GLO will have their annual Circus Day on Friday, June 23. The children will enjoy their activities from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the dining room. They are in need of volunteers, so if you are interested, contact Misty Donald at 675-8125.

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

June 1, 26 years
Judy Santibanez
GLO Teacher

June 1, 3 years
Becky Garringer
GLO Teacher

June 24, 25 years
Jeanne Jowers
Church Accountant



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

May 2017

Budget	May	Year-to-Date
Required	\$264,000	\$1,302,311
Given	\$230,655	\$1,301,980

EVENT CALENDAR:

JUNE

4-10 High School Camp

7 Summer Fun Nights Begin
@ FLC

10 Habitat for Humanity Work Day

11 FBC Family Pool Party

14-18 Middle School Camp

15 Children's Day at the Park

17 Habitat for Humanity Work Day

27 Children's Day Trip
Splash Kingdom



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