

FIRSTwords

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

ROUND UP SUNDAY

August 27

It is so hard to believe that school is about to begin. With the anticipation of school starting, we have an exciting new start in Sunday school as our preschoolers through high schoolers promote to new classes. Not only is this Sunday an exciting time for children and students; but as a church we have the opportunity, after a wonderful time of worship, to gather for a great brisket lunch and enjoy fellowship. Sign up for the lunch in Sunday school or contact Debra (675-8116 or debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org). Cost is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children (K-5th grade) and preschool is free. There will also be inflatable games for children and students. This is an important Sunday for our church and we hope you will make every effort to attend on August 27.



FALL CLASSES

We have an exciting line-up of classes for the Fall. There is variety as well as practicality. One of the new offerings is on Sunday mornings. We are going to be adding short-term (3-4 weeks) training classes during the Sunday school hour. They will include financial classes and grandparenting seminars, in addition to our adult Bible study classes. These classes are still in the planning stages and we will give more information in the near future.

DivorceCare has been part of our Wednesday evening schedule for the past eleven years. This is a quality resource as well as a place of refuge for people who have gone through, or are going through, a divorce. Most of the people who go through the thirteen-week series stay in the class for one or even two more cycles. It really is that helpful.

Similarly, GriefShare is a wonderful resource for people who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The loss may have been recent or long ago, yet the pain may be the same. GriefShare is a place of grace and kindness.

Grace Based Parenting, by Dr. Tim and Darcy Kimmel, is a video series in three parts. Each part has eight weekly sessions. We were able to offer Part 1 last Spring. Those parents will be able to move on to Part 2 this fall. We will offer Part 1 to parents who would like to begin looking at parenting through a grace lens.

We are pleased that FBC will co-host Fresh Grounded Faith Conference, a women's event this coming October, with Jennifer Rothschild as the main speaker. As part of this great opportunity, we will offer a video based Bible study for women. This study, written by Jennifer Rothschild, will be offered on Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings. There is more to come. Be watching for times and room numbers as well as additional class offerings.



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

Dr. Phil Christopher
Senior Pastor

I know it is only the first of August and you still have some vacation time planned this month. We will be in Victoria this week – not exactly the paradise destination in travel brochures, but scenic Victoria is where our granddaughter lives. Need I say more? Even if you are still in summer mode, the start of school is just around the corner. Our August issue features stories on the new beginnings that come this time of year.

I want to approach the subject of new opportunities by pointing to “winter.” Say what? I realize in the “dog days” of August, winter seems like a long way off. I am not speaking so much about the “season” as about the brevity of life and how opportunities can slip away. As Teve sings in Fiddler on the Roof: “Sunrise, sunset...quickly go the days.” The prophet Jeremiah announces the urgency of our decisions: “The harvest has past, the summer has ended but nothing has changed for us. We are still waiting for God’s healing.”

The Apostle Paul understood the urgency of our living with the approaching winter as he pleaded with Timothy, “Come quickly, do it now, winter is coming.” Time was of the essence. He wrote from a Roman jail knowing his days were numbered. The Apostle called out to his dear friend, Timothy, “Do your best to come to me before it is too late... winter is coming.”

*Come quickly, do it now,
winter is coming...*

Paul needed a pastoral visit before he faced the executioner. He feared that spring would be too late. Paul understood that the high seas of the Mediterranean and the continual cloud cover would make navigation next to impossible during the winter. So he urged his brother to come quickly before the opportunity is lost forever.

Paul’s plea about “Coming quickly” became the title of one of the most famous sermons ever preached. It was preached thirty-seven times in First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by Clarence Edward McCartney. The congregation was so moved by this “call to urgency” the church asked the sermon be preached every year. All of us need this kind of message as we approach new beginnings. What will we do with them?

There are simply things in life that cannot be neglected or put off. Opportunities perish with procrastination; doors can shut. These observations are not intended to create panic or fear, but invite us to live with an urgency in making the most of our opportunities – “Come quickly, do it now, winter is coming.”

Perhaps the word that undermines our sense of urgency more than anything else is manana – tomorrow. What if Timothy had waited till “tomorrow?” It is so easy in our busyness to keep saying, “I’ll get to that later,” but later never comes and winter arrives. Perhaps it is time for you to mend a grudge, say “thank you,” share a compliment, or say, “I love you; please forgive me” – winter is coming.

Please do not hear this as a guilt trip. I hope this will be a grace moment as we journey into a “new school year” filled with all kinds of possibilities. The poet, Tennyson, said, “It is not too late to seek a new world.” As we approach this time of new beginnings: What is God calling you to do right now in your life? What have you been putting off? As we move to a time of new beginnings, whatever you need to do, do it today. Trust, as you act, God will bless your decision more than you can imagine.

Begin now!

Phil

BACK To School

HANDS & FEET

by *Susie Vandever*

I have the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ everyday as a teacher. Neither college classes nor Sunday School taught me to separate the two. Dottie Parker told me that I shouldn't have to say anything; my students, parents, and coworkers should be able to tell about my faith by my actions. She also taught me to love and build strong relationships with my students and faculty. I work hard to carry on her legacy. I am blessed to work with people that pray with and for one another and their students. Also, I work with a wonderful PTO that prays over us often. They start our year off with a prayer walk the night before. My faith guides me daily and I couldn't do my job without it. I'm thankful for a church that supports and prays for teachers too.

NEW JOURNEY

by *Alex Sanchez*

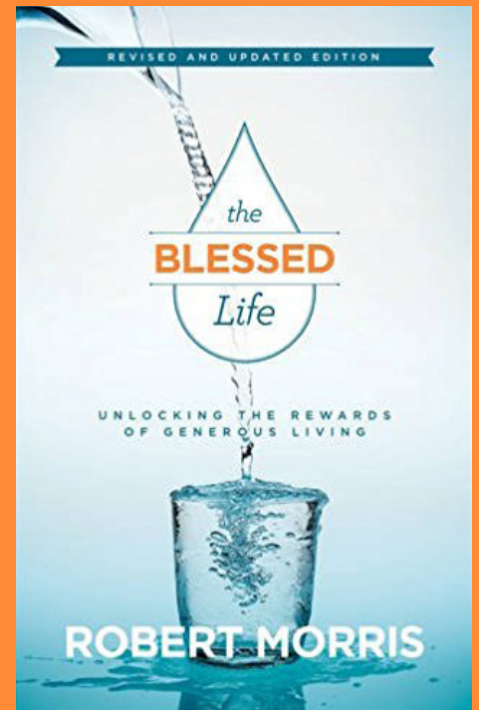
Being a first year teacher brings up so many emotions. There is much excitement, some fear, and a little anxiety. I anticipate my first year will be hard and chaotic, but also very rewarding. This year, I will be teaching 4th grade Social Studies and Science at Anson Elementary. My hope for this year is to make my classroom fun, interactive, and hands on. For a while, I did not know where I would be teaching and I was worried about where I would end up. I have seen God's hand throughout the entire hiring process. From the moment I walked in the doors, I knew Anson was the school God had planned for me for my first year of teaching. I am so excited to start this new journey of being a real adult and I cannot wait for all that He has planned for me and my students this year.

THE BLESSED LIFE OF GENEROSITY

We are grateful our church is discovering the “Blessed Life” as we give to God the “firstfruits” of our income recognizing God owns everything. God is not after our money, but our hearts. The evidence that God has our hearts is this – we simply give to give rather than to receive. We give in gratitude because of God’s gift of grace. We want to bless people, help people, and enlarge the Kingdom of God. As we give, we are changed from takers living in the fear we will not have enough into generous givers. When we begin to give, God does a wonderful work in our hearts. We begin to give because we want to give out of our love for God.

Even though you might have been out this summer, your gifts did not take a vacation. You have been a channel for funding God’s work, enlarging the Kingdom, and blessing others. You blessed 200 children as they heard the gospel during Vacation Bible School, reached the Rio Grande Valley through our Family Mission Trip to McAllen, provided 36,000 meals at City Light this year, built a Habitat House at the cost of \$25,000, and helped establish the first food bank in Skopje, Macedonia. You have had a busy summer blessing people.

If you have not discovered the blessed life of generosity, this could be a time for you to make a new beginning in giving and trust that God will provide for your every need. The approaching Fall will bring changes. The greatest change could be what God does in our hearts as we give because we want to give.



2017 CHOIR AND MISSIONS KICK-OFF PARTY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 6:00 P.M.
FAMILY LIFE CENTER

Don't miss your chance to play games and enjoy an evening at the FLC and register for our Wednesday night Children's Choirs & Missions.



Summer FUN NIGHTS at the flc

The last Wednesday Summer Fun Night will be August 9. We have had a wonderful time this summer eating, playing, and fellowshiping together. If you haven't had the opportunity to join us this summer, please come for our final fun night on August 9.



PEAKS & VALLEYS

by Claire Preston

When I hear the final school bell ring in May, my heart and mind race at the excitement awaiting me over the next three months. Summertime represents endless opportunities to engage in church youth activities, as well as a time of rest and renewal. The stresses of school become distant with the anticipation of camp. Days filled with fellowship, worship, and the beauty of the Colorado Mountains provides revival in my faith and commitment to God.

This season provides time to focus and seek the goodness of God in my daily life and explore where He is working through me. I begin each morning with an open mind and a prayer of Psalm 143:8 “Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.”

As the new school year approaches, fear of the unknown becomes abundant in the life of a student. In Mark 9, Peter, James, and John felt these same fears. Their hearts yearned for additional time with their Savior, and they were hesitant to begin the unknown. Allowing the Spirit to work through them, the disciples departed from the exhilarating mountaintop to continue their ministry. As students journey from the peaks of summer to what appears to be the lower valleys of school, our faith is only strengthened when we walk in Him and continue in a forward direction.

Our Lord leads us and guides us through our path in life, and we know He will not turn His back on us. He remains our constant guide even as the seasons change. I will cling to my faith in anticipation of the new school year because I am confident my Savior already knows the way.



CAPTIVATED

by Mark Pearson

As summer comes to a close, and another year of school is getting ready to start up, there is nothing more important to me than my faith. I'm getting ready to start my junior year at ACU, and something I've learned in my first two years is that college is a ton of fun, but it's at its best when Jesus is leading the charge in my life. I believe this is true for any time of life! College is tough, and there are a ton of different things that grab for my attention, such as class, homework, baseball, as well as a social life. However, I find myself feeling like the man in Jesus' parable in Matthew 13 who found treasure in a field and, "in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." My relationship with Jesus has captivated me, and I'd give all I have just for this one thing! I believe it's more important than all the other things going on, and the cool thing is that when this faith comes first, all the other things fall into place and the relationships that come from them are much more rich and valuable. In other words, when faith is at the center of my life, I don't feel so stressed about school that I disregard all the people around me. Instead, I feel like I'm able to invest in their lives, as they invest in mine, and have true community and friendships that will last a lifetime.

ACTING IN *love*

MCALLEN FAMILY MISSION TRIP
JULY 23 - 28



BIG HOPE

by Kathy Shackelford, Big Sister for Big Hope

There is a child in Abilene who needs hope and encouragement. You can be the person who gives that by investing one hour a week in their life. It's only during the school schedule at Martinez Elementary. It doesn't cost any money, only a little time.

I met Brianna in the fall of 2015, just after my mother had passed away. She was a breath of fresh air, full of life and ideas. She was in 2nd grade and "sporting an attitude" of confidence and spunk!

Brianna is artistic and creative. She is athletic and bright. Her weakness is reading aloud and responding to boundaries. A typical young girl who has many obstacles in her life. I finally realized that she needed mentoring, not only in her school work, but in life.

I asked her early on, "What is your greatest wish?" She said, "Cupcakes raining from heaven." She melted my heart that first week. She is going into the 4th grade this fall. Fourth grade math is over my head, but we can still read, play cards, and do a creative activity. I have learned that all she needs is unconditional love and consistency.

We have been "pen pals" this summer. Her letters and artwork are amazing. I am blessed by one talented and spunky young lady!

Being a "Big Sister" has been challenging, heartwarming, and a complete blessing in my life!

First Baptist Church is a proud partner with the Big Hope program through Big Brothers/Big Sisters at Martinez Elementary. Our purpose is to encourage children through friendship by matching Martinez students in one-on-one relationships with mentors from our church. The new school year is fast approaching, and we are looking to recruit new volunteers! Volunteers spend just one hour per week playing board games, swinging on swings, reading, coloring, working on puzzles, assisting with homework, and, most importantly, being a good listener. If you would like to volunteer or need more information, please contact Rebecca Hunt at 675-8112 or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org.



Volunteers Needed For Round Up Sunday, August, 27

In order to make Round Up Sunday a success, we are in need of volunteers to help man the inflatable games, set them up, and take them down. If you are willing to serve for an hour, please call the missions' office, 675-8112 or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org.
WE NEED YOU!



Habitat for Humanity

Thank you to our volunteers for your hard work on the Habitat project! So far we have built the inside and outside framing for the Mulanda's home and moved the structure to 4317 Congress St. Future build dates in August are the 12, 19, and 26. Please contact Rebecca Hunt in the missions' office at (325) 675-8112 or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org if you would like to sign up.

FBC Foundation Grant Request Forms Are Available

Forms are available in the office.
Deadline to return the form is noon,
Friday, September 8.

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

August 1, 11 years
Cody Favor
Pastor for Students

August 12, 9 years
Rosalinda Garcia
GLO Teacher

August 1, 2 years
Donna Lee
GLO Teacher

August 24, 2 years
Kim Cummings
*Ministry Assistant to the
Pastor for Recreation*

August 2, 16 years
Steve Queen
*Director, Counseling &
Family Enrichment*

August 29, 11 years
Suzanne Shaw
*Receptionist/
Church Clerk*

August 5, 4 years
Jennifer Woodard
FFP Director

August 29, 6 years
Becky Tucker
Pastor for Children

August 8, 6 years
Jennifer Miller
*Ministry Assistant to the
Pastors for Preschool
and Children*

August 31, 18 years
Eric Couvion
*Superintendent of
Buildings & Grounds*

EVENT CALENDAR:

AUGUST

- 8 Rockin' Moms
- 9 Last Wednesday Fun Night
@ FLC
- Buildings & Grounds Committee
- 10 Children's Event
- 13 Missions Committee
- Vision Coordinating Team
- 15 Deacons' Meeting
- Finance Committee
- 17 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 20 Lord's Supper
- Personnel Committee
- Youth End of Summer
Swim Party
- Ministry of Counseling
Open House
- 27 Round Up Lunch
- 30 Wednesday Night Activities
Begin
- Church Conference
- Children's Choir/Mission
Enrollment Party

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

July 2017

Budget	July	Year-to-Date
Required	\$247,000	\$1,789,311
Given	\$221,979	\$ 1,773,682



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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