

FIRST *words*

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

With summer rapidly coming to a close and the start of school now just weeks away, we are eager about what the fall will bring for us here at First Baptist. There are several events already on the calendar which all revolve around the new school year. Just as the kids are excited about starting the new school year and being in the next grade, we are just as excited about starting fresh and getting back into the rhythm of church life.

Here are a few things to be looking forward to:

ROUND-UP SUNDAY

It will all kick-off with Round-Up Sunday, August 20 when we will have our traditional western themed worship service followed by a complete BBQ meal served in the Family Life Center. The meal will be the same as in year's past and will focus on just having a meal together and not any other activities. This will enable us to spread out serving and eating the meal in both the skating rink and the gym.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Starting on August 23, our normal Wednesday night programming will kick off. The meal in the dining room will begin at 4:45 p.m. and then all children, youth, and adult activities will take place from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Read more about the intergenerational Bible study in this edition of First Words.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Of course, there will be several special events throughout the fall. 1st Grade Bible presentation, Senior Adult Emphasis highlighting our members for 50+ years, and a church-wide event to be shared later. A great fall is in the plans, so start planning now how you will be a part!



FORWARD TOGETHER

By the time you are reading these words, the staff will have returned from our annual staff retreat in Glorieta. I am thrilled to have such a wonderful staff with whom to spend time and collaborate as we discern and plan, rest, and reflect together in preparation of another fruitful year of ministry with and among you all.

The arrival of this article will also arrive at a time when I will have officially had the privilege of serving as your pastor for six months. I can tell you that it has truly been a gift and pleasure to get to know you over these past months. I've been blessed by the way God's Spirit has moved in our midst during this time and look forward to continuing to be blown away by the beauty of this congregation and the graciousness of God to us.

This summer has been full of meaningful experiences. I've had the opportunity to attend both the CBF and BGCT annual meetings, spend some time around our youth at various activities, and work alongside my own family and other FBC Abilene members in McAllen in mission and ministry. My children have had the opportunity for service and fellowship through mission experiences and summer camps. It has been a busy and joy-filled summer as your pastor.

As the summer is beginning to wind down, I am looking forward with great anticipation about the fall season at FBC. I know God is growing us all, and as we return from our various summer adventures, I trust that God has amazing things in store for us. As we prepare for Roundup Sunday and the resuming of Wednesday night activities, I hope you are already making plans to be a part. This church is not complete without you! I know that God has new things to teach us all as we grow together in this upcoming season.

My prayer is that your last days of summer are filled with joy and air conditioning (or maybe a pool). And, I pray God will reveal new things to you and that you will find new ways to more fully become like Christ to the world around you. I know this is ultimately where God is leading us all, and I am thrilled to walk that road together.

Love,

Brandon



PRAYER PARTNER SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

A continued priority for our church is to deepen relationships between generations. At FBC, we believe that strengthening intergenerational relationships helps the faith of all ages and gives witness to God's continued work in the world. It has been almost three years since we have had assigned prayer partner Sunday school classes and we are ready to revive this wonderful program. We are planning to celebrate God's work in each generation on the morning of Sunday, September 10. On that Sunday, we are asking the partnering classes to meet together for at least 15 minutes getting to know each other and spending time in prayer with each other.

We realize this effort might feel a little awkward for some, but we believe it is healthy for our church. This is an important moment for different generations, from the oldest to the youngest, to interact, engage, and ultimately know each other.

As we prepare for September 10, please pray for each generation and join us as we encourage each other through fellowship and prayer.

*"The Lord is good and His love endures forever;
His faithfulness continues through all generations."
- Psalm 100:5*



1ST GRADE BIBLE PRESENTATION

We have a wonderful tradition at First Baptist of giving our new First Graders a Bible as a gift from the church. This gift is given not only to show the children how much they are loved and supported by our church, but it is also to encourage them to grow in their spiritual journey. We will have the opportunity to gift our new 1st graders with their Bibles on Saturday, August 26 at a backyard ceremony. The next morning, Sunday, August 27, these children will be recognized during the Worship Service. This recognition will allow our church family to see these children with their new Bibles and show the children the love and support they have from this wonderful church.



We would ask that you be in prayer for these new 1st graders, as well as all of our children, as we come to the end of summer and they begin a new school year. We are so grateful we belong to such a caring and giving church family! Thank you for being such a gracious church to our children!



July 2023



8,302 MEALS SERVED

Includes MWF meals, Sunday Breakfast, Continental Breakfast, Sack Lunches, and City Light Market*



512 VOLUNTEER HOURS

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:



45 HOUSEHOLDS

helped with rent and utilities



475 WALK-INS

bus passes, clothing and other



170 MAIL

Delivered and checked



98 SHOWERS



CITY LIGHT UPDATES

City Light not only prepares hot lunches three days a week and breakfast on Sunday morning, they also offer a sack lunch on Wednesdays to be eaten with their soup or take home after their meal. We need volunteers help put together these sack lunches on Tuesday mornings beginning at 8:30 a.m. Each of the 450 sacks include a can of Vienna Sausage, bag of chips, bag of cookies, favorite scripture passage, spoon, and napkin. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Beth Young (325-675-8112 or beth.young@fbcabilene.org) in the missions' office. Also, please pray for this important ministry as it really does make a difference in our community.

CARES ACT FUNDING:

In July, the United Way of Abilene awarded \$196,000 of CARES Act funding to City Light Community Ministries. The CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act was distributed from the federal government to the city of Abilene to provide necessary financial relief for our residents. In TWO WEEKS, all \$196,000 was allocated to our neighbors in Abilene. Neighbors completed an extensive application process to demonstrate their need for this financial assistance. The funding enabled us to help families with up to six months of both back and future rent payments. A HUGE THANKS to Alicia Nickelson, Beth Young, Makenzie Morrison, Ron Rainwater, and Susie Vandever for helping Stephanie Stewart process applications, schedule appointments, allocate funding, and help our neighbors navigate the entire process. We have been doing 12 appointments a week, and will finish distributing the funds on August 11. Next month we will share more about how this money will change our neighbors' lives!



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 JULY

SUMMER GROUPS - 256 INDIVIDUALS

DYESS FAMILIES - 2 NIGHTS

PARTIES - 29 PARTIES

FITNESS USE - 332 INDIVIDUALS

FBC GROUPS - 8 GROUPS

FITNESS CLASSES - 17 INDIVIDUALS

SERENITY HOUSE - 279 INDIVIDUALS

GLO - 1 VISIT

FULL BUILDING RENTAL - 10 GROUPS

WALK-INS - 1179 INDIVIDUALS



MCALLEN MISSION TRIP REPORT

By John Moore

Penitas, Texas is the place to be on the second week of July every year for our Family Mission Trip! This year, we were two degrees cooler than Abilene with a steady and highly humid breeze out of the south. Thankfully, we had a great canopy on location providing shade and we added the new missions canopy tent (thanks Candy and Becky) to complete the shaded cooling station on site of the new Buckner Home for the Martinez family (102 degrees out in the sun and 96 degrees under the shade). This family of six has been working hard to make this new home a reality and our team of 12 FBC'ers plus Brisa, a new friend of FBC and 14-year-old Martinez daughter, worked hard during that week to help them move their new home closer to completion. Our group, led by our Flooring Supervisor (Jill Hudson) and Paint Supervisor (Tim Griffin), painted and floored the entire house during this week. A beautiful pale seafoam teal with bright white trim were the exterior paint colors and the laminate flooring was of the golden amber oak variety. On the last day, our shelving team, led by our Shelving Supervisor (Becky Tucker), completed the kitchen pantry shelving. Your team from FBC, and Brisa, worked really hard to make all this happen and, in the process, helped change the future for this family through nice, affordable housing. However, the greatest change happened in our team. We saw and bore witness to the fact that God is moving in this unincorporated area of Texas and in the families and ministry of Buckner International. Witnessing this God movement in this community changed our hearts and serving together brought us in deeper fellowship with each other. We learned new painting techniques and flooring skills which will prepare us for future ministry projects.

We added to our project a tour of the





Continued from page 6.

border and of the Catholic Charities Respite Center in downtown McAllen. Our eyes were opened and hearts broken to hear stories of families desperate to make life better for their families here in our country. This demonstration of love and hospitality to the “stranger” made an impact on our team and will shape future ministry projects for our Family Mission Trips in this area. We were thankful to learn of the great relationship with Buckner and Catholic Charities and the strong desire to cooperatively work together to minister to families. Our challenge question towards the end of the week, which is the same for any ministry project away from home, was this: How do we bring this joy of serving, and what God is teaching us, back home? Taking advantage of current ministry opportunities, realizing we have much to be thankful for and to give, opening our eyes to see new ministry opportunities, and clearing our busy schedules were all discussed to answer our challenge questions. That question goes to you now...How are you serving and leading your family to serve in our community, state, and world through our church? Maybe even now, God is calling you to find new and existing ways to serve at or with our church. Maybe God’s calling you to serve in the heat of Penitas, Texas next July. Will you join us next year? We will have our new missions canopy up, lots of cool shade for you, and we’ll try our best to arrange for cooler conditions! We had a great Family Mission trip for 2023 and we’re thankful to be at a church who is willing to pray for us while we’re gone, continue our local ministries in our absence (shout out to our City Light staff and church staff), and invest in a family trying to make a better future for those they love.



WEDNESDAY NIGHT

INTERGENERATIONAL SMALL GROUPS

Our first semester of implementing an intergenerational Bible study went extremely well and we're excited to do it again this fall starting AUGUST 30 at 6 p.m.! It's a great way to get to know people in our church, as well as study scripture together. Reading Scripture in community is one of the best, if not the best, way to read scripture.

TO HELP GUIDE THE CONVERSATION WE ASK 6 QUESTIONS:

- **What did you appreciate about the story?**
- **What did you struggle with in the story?**
- **What did this story teach you about God?**
- **What did this story teach you about people?**
- **Now that you've heard this story, how will you live your life differently?**
- **Who do you know who needs to hear this story?**

We believe intergenerational groups are a great way to continue doing adult Bible study on Wednesday nights because it helps us grow closer to each other while studying God's word. So, we encourage you to become a part of a group! If you aren't sure, find someone who did participate and ask them about it. Or, just show up and try it out. I'm certain we'll see you again.

REGISTRATION: Next week, Melissa Mundy will send an email with a link to register. Be watching for it. For organizational purposes, online registration is preferred, but not required. If you need assistance registering online, please email Matthew at matthew.broyles@fbcabilene.org.

Check out what some spring participants had to say about the intergenerational groups:

I was so excited at the prospect of being in a group with some of our very senior adult women. Turns out, I was the very senior adult in our group! We also had several of our college age women who had many deep insights into God's Word, poured out such wisdom, and could boldly express their faith. Although I had to miss some meetings, I still felt connected to the ladies and loved running into them on Sundays. What a great way for us to connect with people we might not have otherwise.

- Jane Todd

What could be better than studying God's Word - in a way that it applies to our daily lives - with three generations of women all in one circle? This is what we did on Wednesday nights in the spring. In my circle, some of the women were trusted long-time friends; while others were ones I did not know well, and others were completely new to me. Now, they are all friends!!

Studying the "women in the genealogy of Jesus" through a set of questions, led to deep insight, valuable wisdom from the others, and concrete ways to put scripture to work every day. Isn't that our goal?

Discussing the same scripture for two weeks was helpful. It gave the opportunity to ponder longer and to think on what others in the group had shared. If you had to miss a week, it was easy to catch up. No pressure!

Join us in the fall. God has reserved a place for you in the circle.

- Linda Neal

Susan and I participated in the first intergenerational sessions held in the Spring of 2023.

The sessions allowed us the opportunity to meet with other FBC family members and to hear their stories while studying different Bible stories. Our group's ages ranged from college student to mid- 70s.

If FBC Abilene really wants to be a family, we need to make an effort to know our family. The intergenerational sessions allow us the opportunity to learn member's history and their concerns. It is a chance to take off our masks and realize we all need support from others.

Susan and I would highly recommend that you take the time from your busy schedule to participate in the fall sessions. You might find a new church member that needs your knowledge and wisdom.

- Harold Preston

When I first learned about our intergenerational Bible studies, I was wary. God is merciful, however, and created this group. It's lively and rife with diversity of age, opinion, and political conviction, but we have more in common than not. Despite being much younger than most of them, I am respected, as I can share wisdom in the same way they share it with me. It is a community of exchange as we offer to one another what we need, be it prayer or conversation. I am grateful for these friends and look forward to returning to this group.

- Makenzie Morrison

The intergenerational group was something that I was hesitant to join. I didn't want to change. I was comfortable with the way things were. However, once it began, I was overwhelmed by the amount of love and support I felt from this group of men. No matter our age, we all had similar experiences which helped us to relate to each other. The different perspectives on the passages challenged my faith and allowed me to grow. From college age to senior adult, I was able to learn something from every man in our group. I'm thankful for this opportunity and this time I'm excited to join in.

- David Draper

KIDS (& FAMILIES) FUN NIGHT @ PLAY FAIRE PARK Thursday, August 10 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

It is hard to believe we are beginning to wind down our summer activities and getting ready for a new school year!

One of our favorite end-of-the-summer activities for the children's ministry is a family night at Play Faire Park. This event will be held on Thursday, August 10, from 6 - 8 p.m. The temperature on this night always seems to be extra hot, but that does not keep our families from enjoying hamburgers, miniature golf, and great fellowship.

This event is for all children who have completed Kindergarten - 5th grade as well as their families. We do ask for reservations so we will have enough food prepared!

Please call Jennifer Miller at 675-8105 to make your reservations. **These reservations need to be made by noon on Wednesday, August 9.**



WORSHIP AND MUSIC FALL SCHEDULE

This fall, the Sanctuary Choir rehearsals will begin on Wednesday night, August 9, at 6 p.m. in the choir room. The title of our Christmas music is WONDERFUL, and the Christmas Music Kick-Off is set for Sunday night, September 10, at 6 p.m. in the choir room. Youth Choir will start back up with the Youth Choir Kick-Off on Sunday night, September 10, at 5 p.m. in the choir room.

We hope you will consider being a part of the Worship and Music Ministry this fall and participate with us as we lead in worship each week.

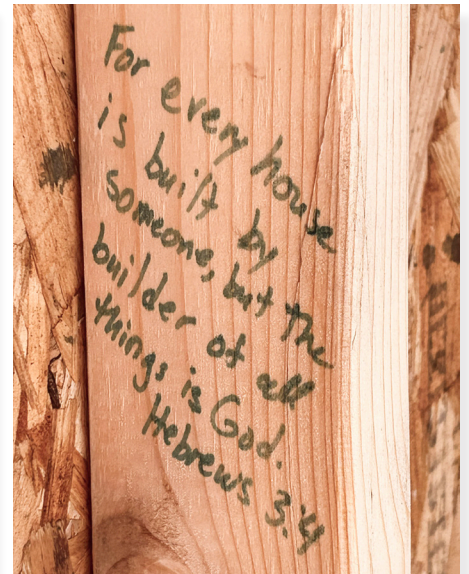


FBC FOUNDATION GRANT REQUEST FORMS ARE AVAILABLE

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

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY UPDATE

Habitat for Humanity continues to move forward with the Daniels home on Cedar Street. If you have a small group who would like to volunteer, please contact Habitat for Humanity at info@abilenehabitat.org (325-670-0489) or the missions' office to help coordinate a service day with Habitat (325-675-8112 - Beth Young). This is a great ministry service opportunity for your Sunday school class, small group, or office team! Please continue to keep the Daniels family in your prayers as their home progresses.



WEDNESDAY THING

The Wednesday Thing is a weekly event primarily for Senior Adults; however, anyone may attend.

This fall, we will gather at 4:00 p.m. and enjoy presentations which are educational, informative, and inspirational.

Our first gathering will be on September 6, at 4:00 p.m., and will feature a presentation from Jay Moore on the earlier days of Abilene, Texas.

We will gather in the sanctuary as Jay has an abundance of slides illustrating the remarkable history of our city.

We look forward to seeing you as the first Wednesday Thing will be engaging and lively!

FBC in Action

This is a new service ministry that needs more help. Use this QR code to fill out the information about different gifts you have. Paper copies of the form are available in the church office. This will let us know different areas that you might be able to offer a helping hand to Senior Adults, widows/widowers, single moms, and the vulnerable in our Church. You will only be called upon when a request come to us.

Please contact Susie Vandever @ 325-675-8103, in the office, if you have any questions about this ministry.



KIDS CAMP

by Becky Tucker

What a week..., and I mean that in the most positive way! It may have been extremely hot and may have been a little chaotic or even quite chaotic at times during the week, but we could not have asked for a better week than we had at Kids Camp. Our camp theme was, Discover: Faith that Pursues Jesus. We had many opportunities throughout the week to understand, explore, and discover more about Jesus. We were encouraged to not only look for Jesus ourselves, but to share Jesus with others.

I cannot brag on our kids enough! I know you get to see these wonderful children each Sunday, but you would've been so proud of all 8 kids who went with us. Each child represented their families and this church so well, but most importantly they represented Jesus as they showed kindness and love to everyone. Watching each of them help each other, encourage each other, laugh with each other, and worship together was such a blessing!

We are blessed to have such wonderful children in our Children's ministry, but we are also blessed to have such a wonderful church family who prays for and supports our children in so many ways. Thank you, church family!

Quotes from OUR CAMPERS:

"One of my favorite parts of camp was when Britney/Millie was trying to get on the slide - Something I really enjoyed was Bible study."

- EMERSON WOODARD

"I loved getting closer to my church friends. Plus, the spice cake was amazing!"

- CAROLINE HARRIS

"I loved that Emerson French braided my hair! I liked all the games and sleeping on the top bunk!"

- MAKELA PATTERSON

"I was excited to make new friends from a different church & I liked going for a walk with my dad."

- JAY PATRICK PATTERSON

"I couldn't stop laughing watching Britney struggle to pull Caroline up by her life vest onto the lake trampoline. Caroline looked like she couldn't breathe by the time she got on."

- CORIE O'CONNELL

"I think it is very fun for kids to learn about God and have FUN! I'd definitely recommend it and will be going back next year!"

- CATHRYN DARBY

"What I loved most about camp was hanging out with friends and learning more about God."

- LANDRY GIBSON

"I loved Celebration (singing and motions) and loved seeing old friends that I have met from the last two years of camp."

- REAGAN CRAIG

FORWARD TOGETHER COLLEGE UPDATE

I'm looking forward to getting back to our regular rhythm of ministry this fall. The first four weeks of college are the most important for new students as they explore options of where and how to spend their time. As we get going this semester, please pray:

- That students will transition well to a new phase of life.
- That students will seek to find a church home.
- That we form strong connections with new students at church fairs and other events.
- That current students continue to be inspired to lead as new students come.
- That all students will feel welcomed, valued, and loved by God and our church.

CURRENT NEEDS:

We are going to begin hosting dinners for the college group twice a month. Katie and I are hosting one each month, but we need an additional family/house each month to host (September - May). If this is something you're interested in, please contact me at Matthew.broyles@fbcabilene.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS:



AUGUST 23

HSU Dorm Move-in
McMurry Dorm Move-in

AUGUST 28

First day of classes for
all universities

AUGUST 24

ACU Church Fair

AUGUST 30

FBC College Students
@ Bahama Bucks

We're looking forward to a GREAT year!

August

- 6 Personnel Committee Meeting
Goodbye/Hello Party for 5th Graders/
Tucker Home
- 7 5th Grade Trip to Ft. Worth Zoo
- 9 Buildings/Grounds Committee Meeting
- 10 Kids Fun Night @ Play Faire Park
- 13 Welcome to Kindergarten Pool Party/
Tucker Home
Recreation Board Meeting
- 15 City Light Board Meeting
Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 17 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 20 Round-Up Sunday/Lord's Supper
Round-Up Lunch @ FLC
Missions Committee Meeting
- 23 Wednesday Night Meal/
Activities Begin
HSU & McMurry Dorm Move-in
- 24 ACU Church Fair
- 26 First Grade Bibles/Tucker Home
- 27 First Grade Bible Recognition in
morning worship
- 30 Church Conference
Women's Ministry Meeting
College @ Bahama Bucks

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

July 2023

| <u>Budget</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>Year-to-Date</u> |
|---------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Required | \$ 301,060 | \$ 1,920,420 |
| Given | \$ 244,841 | \$ 1,683,392 |

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

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

August 2, 22 years

Steve Queen

Director, Ministry of Counseling
& Family Enrichment

August 8, 12 years

Jennifer Miller

M. A. to Pastors for Preschool & Children

August 29, 17 years

Suzanne Shaw

Receptionist/Church Clerk

August 29, 12 years

Becky Tucker

Pastor for Children & Women's Ministry

August 31, 24 years

Eric Couvion

Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

1333 North 3rd, Abilene, TX 79601
fbc@fbcabilene.org | www.fbcabilene.org
325-673-5031