



# FIRSTWORDS

Howdy FBC Abilene! My family and I cannot wait to be with you on Round Up Sunday August 17! God has opened doors up beyond what we could have imagined for our family to be with you all. Here is one of the latest examples: as we were preparing to place our house on the market, my wife reached out to friends of ours who had left the education field and become realtors in our area to tell them our house is about to hit the market. They told us they have a few interested families moving into our neighborhood and asked if they could come and see the house early. We of course said great.

After about an hour one of the women (who happened to be Abigail's 4th grade teacher from a few years ago) texted and asked if she could bring her husband by as she was interested in our house. Just a few hours later they asked if they could bring their kids by the house. The next morning, we had an offer on our house that was above the price of what we were expecting to sell the house.

God has been faithful during this process of discernment. God prepared the hearts of our children to be ready to make a move. God provided a house that we love in Abilene. God gave foresight and wisdom to the committee to be so thoughtful and hospitable to our family. Even when I was faced with some food poisoning over call weekend, God was faithful in allowing my nurse practitioner sister who lives in Texas to call in some medicine for me!

*(Continued from cover)*

The next few weeks will be a whirlwind for our family (not unlike the storm that blew through while I was preaching on call weekend!). We look forward to being able to settle down and find a rhythm of life together with you. Praying for you!

Grace and Peace,

**Ray P. Miller, DMin**

save the date



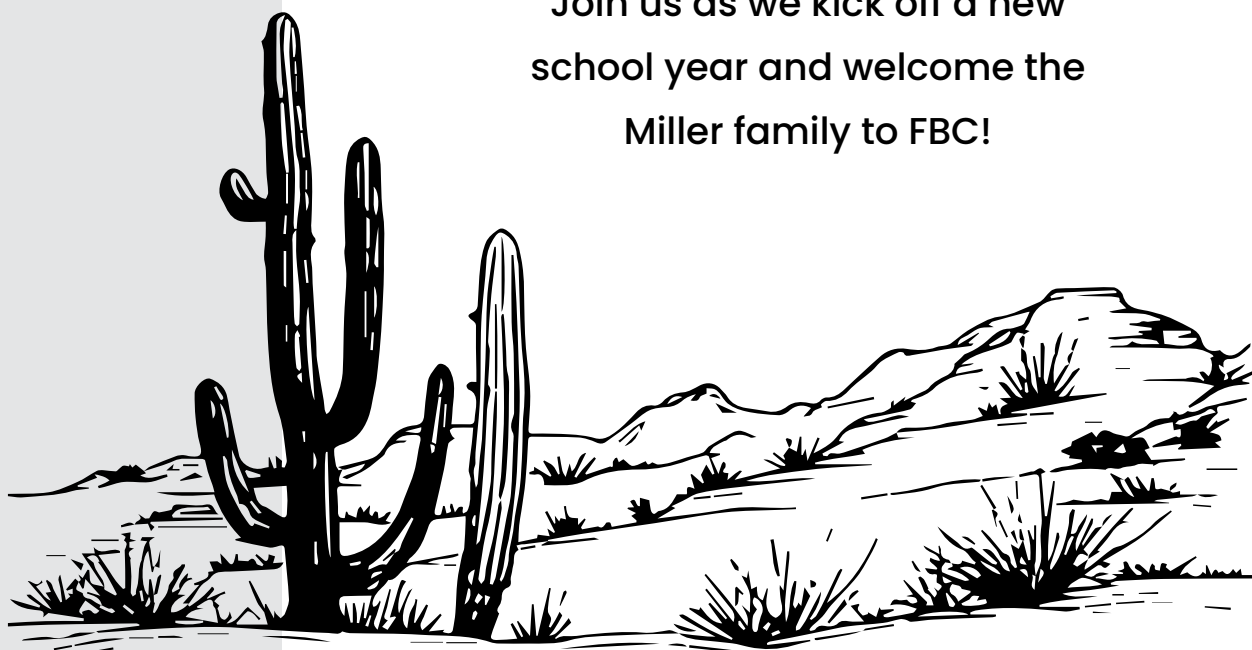
howdy!

# ROUND UP SUNDAY

FBC ★ ABI

08.17.2025

Join us as we kick off a new  
school year and welcome the  
Miller family to FBC!



## **A BIG Thank you to FBC and The Nomad for supporting Plates with a Purpose!**

City Light is grateful for this new social enterprise partnership with The Nomad and how this business seeks transformational change in our neighbors' lives through great food!

Thank you, Chef Keith Sproles, for joining City Light and FBC in this community effort. Please be in prayer for the life change that happens through this new social enterprise and be watching for more dates and great food to come!



Join First Baptist Church on July 20th  
at the Flying Bison Game!

**JULY 20 @ 6:05 PM**

Use the QR Code to reserve your seat.

Recieve \$5 off  
General Admission  
Tickets using code  
**FBC2025.**







## God's Little Ones DAY★CARE

### **Fun news from GLO:**

Continued rise in enrollment with presently 128 children...that is an increase from 90 children in January! We have acquired new teachers as well. Our waitlist remains active, which speaks to the trust and positive reputation we've built within the community.

July's curriculum theme will be "God Made the World Around Us". The children will explore nature through guided walks, hands-on projects, and Bible stories emphasizing God's creation.

**VOLUNTEERS** are always appreciated with our Faith in Action. July CHAPEL lessons will emphasis kindness, sharing, and gratitude. You can be a part of these important lessons by giving of your time to teach a lesson, read scripture, or come pray with the children. Contact GLO (325-675-8125) for days and times. What a special way to spend time with God's little ones! Look for ways to help and volunteer in upcoming First Reminders or contact GLO for volunteer opportunities!

### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

- WATER DAY FRIDAYS
- Planning is underway for our Back-to-School Bash in August
- GLO will be closed July and 4

Each month brings new opportunities to plant seeds of love, learning, and faith. Thank you to our Director, Allie Tobin, her staff, GLO families and our community partners for being part of this journey. Together, we are raising children who are joyful, curious, and rooted in God's love.



**VERY SPECIAL THANKS to the following COMMUNITY PARTNERS for their loving contributions to our CIRCUS DAY which was June 20:**

**Abilene Fire Department**

**Abilene Public Library**

**Buddy from H-E-B**

**Dyess Air Force Base**

**12th Armored Division**

**Jeep Club**

**CWS**

**Hardin Simmons University 6 White Horses**

**First Financial Bank generously donated a bounce house**

**Contractors Services for securing the street for safety**

**Hendrick Hospital's Bernstein Bears**

**Abilene K-9 Unit**

**Abilene Pediatric Dental**

**Taylor County Sheriff Department**

**U.S. Marines**

**Cyber Trucks**

**Atmos Energy**

**Warren CAT**



## MACEDONIA REPORT

I feel so fortunate to have gone to North Macedonia in June. When we were leaving, I told John Moore that I was a little disappointed we did not have more people on the trip. As always, God plans much better than I do. We had multiple blessings that I don't think would have come about if we had a larger group.

First, we had a last-minute opportunity to help a widow clean out an apartment and get it livable. Due to the small size of the apartment, we could not have fit anymore people in there than what we had. After several hours, trash had been thrown away, rooms rearranged and painted, and she and her nephew were left with a livable space and a path forward to continue improving the apartment.

Next, we were invited by Tony and Atela

of AGA Kitchen to visit the space that CBF helped turn into a commercial grade kitchen. With this kitchen, they have a catering business that is serving as many as 200 meals a day. After touring the kitchen and hearing about their ventures, they took us to eat at a traditional Macedonian restaurant as a show of appreciation for what CBF has done. I don't know what I did to be seen as a big part of CBF, but I wasn't going to turn down their offer of a wonderfully curated dinner.

The success of AGA Kitchen brings me to my other major takeaway from the trip—Sustainability. It is wonderful to see CBF investments not only helping people in the present but also creating returns that can be reinvested in the community. AGA Kitchen is using their resources to help



feed as many needy locals as they can. No food goes to waste. Additionally, they have started giving a portion of their proceeds back to CBF monthly. There are too many other aspects of what they do to list here. They treat everything they do as a chance to support others.

The Lee's work with Poraka (homes for adults with mental disabilities) is another example of investing for the future. They are building and tending greenhouses and gardens that can feed the residents of Poraka, as well as support the local food bank. They have vineyards (and possibly more to be purchased) that can sell grapes yearly to create a return for CBF and others who invest. It is also an opportunity for some of the residents of Poraka to participate in the work of growing and harvesting the grapes.

I could go on for hours about all that we saw and witnessed in the short time we had in North Macedonia, but my words would not do it justice. I highly recommend anyone who can to take a trip to see all that is going on for yourself.

**JEFF MESSER**



# NORTH MACEDONIA report

Traveling to North Macedonia for me was such a blessing because I have been praying for Jeff, Alicia, & Ethan Lee since they were commissioned and planning this life change years ago. I loved getting to see where they live, serve, and meet those who they are building amazing partnerships with.

For me, meeting their friends, partners, and ministries was so encouraging. It's just beautiful to see how Jeff & Alicia met so many great people, dreamed together, and made partnerships that benefit their city, communities, & the world.



For example, we spent time with two couples who live, serve, and minister at RETO, a home for men recovering from



addiction. I was encouraged by sitting with them, hearing how they came to serve in this ministry, and hearing stories of the trials and rewards they face daily. I could encourage and edify them in their ministry because we got to see and meet people whose lives have been transformed under their care. They felt God's call to GO and DO, and they are doing that daily while maintaining their sobriety.

Another highlight for me was meeting a family from South Africa who have been serving in Macedonia and partnering with the Lees in many different ways. We were able to visit while cleaning and repairing a widow's apartment. We chatted about raising children and dealing with life while trying to be the hands and feet of Christ. They also felt the call to GO and DO, and it is not easy, but they could testify of God's provision and leadership along the way.



Next, I was in awe of the workers who serve those who were once left in institutions with poor conditions and no hope. They now live in Paroka, a clean and beautiful group home. The beneficiaries are thriving, happy, and working together to help one another live like family. The workers were kind, encouraging, and they shared how they love their friends and their jobs at Poroka and how that had changed their lives.



Whether we are here in Abilene or in North Macedonia, serving the Lord and others is the same. People need the Lord, and we can show His love like our friends in North Macedonia who are delivering food from a food bank, gardening with special friends, or cooking amazing meals for people in need. Therefore, we also should GO & DO the same, wherever we

are, wherever God has planted us. Romans 10:15 encourages me with the reminder of those who GO & DO...



“How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”

The Lees did not get to North Macedonia and just wait and see what they should do, they got busy doing, and we should do the same.

**BEVERLY MOORE**

# KIDS camp

What a week...and I mean that in the best way possible! It may have been hot and may have been a little 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 Legacy, and we were challenged to think about how we want to be known and especially how we want to be known in our faith legacy.

I cannot brag on our kids enough! I know you get to see many of these wonderful children each Sunday, but you would've been so proud of all 13 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!

**BECKY TUCKER**  
Pastor for Children



**Here are some quotes and favorite things from our campers and sponsors:**

*"My favorite thing at camp is meeting new friends and getting to be a champion at Gagaball." (Jay Patrick)*

*"My favorite part about camp was praying and scriptures. One more thing, 'two is better than one', stick with Jesus." (Presley)*



*"My favorite things were going to the lake and rec." (Levi)*

*"My favorite part of camp was seeing God's nature and swimming in the lake." (Liam)*

*"My favorite part of camp was just being able to be someone's friend, just for them to know they matter and they are wanted/belong." (Luke Preston – jr. sponsor)*



*"My favorite thing about this camp was definitely the assortment of things you can do in one day." (Eliot)*



"My favorite part of camp was watching the children work together and encouraging one another. Can't wait for next year!" (Bridgett Gann – sponsor)

"My favorite thing about camp was getting thrown in the lake by Luke."  
(Charlotte)

"I love attending camp as a sponsor because watching kids worship God is awe inspiring and humbling."  
(Jay Patterson – sponsor)

"Swimming in the pool." (Kade)

*"I love coming to church camp and watching the relationships that are built. My favorite thing was getting to see the growth and development of our kiddos from year to year. I can't wait to come again next year!" (Carrie Allen – sponsor)*

"My favorite thing was making friends and meeting new people." (Maddie)

"I love Jesus. Camp is the best. I also love church. There are good days and a little bit of bad days but mostly good ones, like when we went on walks. I also liked Gagaball. Oh, and sleeping with friends."  
(Joseph)

"Favorite thing at camp was being with everybody." (Mason)

"I love camp so much. I love making friends. I love swimming. I ♡ Becky." (Emily)

"My favorite thing at camp was the pudding challenge and seeing Mrs. Becky thrown in the water!" (Clara)



"My favorite thing at camp was the BIG lake with all the inflatables. Also, getting closer with God! And spending time with my best friends and with the best jr. sponsor, Luke." (Havyn)

# MIDDLE SCHOOL camp

Middle School Camp was a blast! Our students once again attended week one of Horizon Camps at Heart of Texas in Brownwood. This time of year, the weather can be hot and humid, but God gave us a couple of days of light showers and cool weather! The students got to swim in the lake, compete in the Rec games, and dance at the block parties each night. During the week, our students talked about being planted with Christ, rooted in His love, growing in a relationship with Him, and flourishing with Jesus. I pray that the students will continue this excitement for Christ in all they do as they show the life of Jesus in their words and actions, and I hope the students never forget that life happens after camp!



Ways to pray for and encourage our Middle School students after camp:

- Pray that God will help the youth keep their energy and spirits up after camp!
- Ask God to strengthen the students each day as they find opportunities to share Christ's love.
- Ask the Middle Schoolers about their camp experience! (Especially if you see them wearing their "Pressed" shirts)
- Encourage the youth to sign up for camp next year!

***"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ."***  
***– Ephesians 3:17b-18 (NIV)***

**HUNTER BROWN**  
Pastor for Youth







A **big thank** you to each of our sponsors for all your hard work and your dedication to serve our church and students:

Avery LaCroix  
Kristen Patterson  
Lauren Stafford

Also, thank you to our High School students who tagged along to help lead the Middle Schoolers through their week of camp:

Paige Clark  
Stephen Griffith  
Luke Preston  
Hazel Samuels



# HIGH SCHOOL camp

Another great year at High School Camp! Once again, the students enjoyed a week in our Glorieta cabin, and this year, we spent time learning about our theme, "In the Garden." The mountains are an amazing place to learn about God's creation and how God has created us because the students got to be in nature while reflecting about the beauty of nature. The views during our hikes, whitewater rafting, and water games made our fun and fellowship even more enjoyable! Some more fun things we did: made smores, played board games, cooked homemade spaghetti, played putt-putt, made terrariums, and competed in team-building games. Most importantly, the students spent time in God's word reflecting on the love their Creator has for them and for the world around them. I pray that our students will forever remember this week in our FBC Abilene cabin, not only for the fun, food, and fellowship, but also for the opportunity to grow closer in their relationship with Christ.

***Thank you God for camp!***



**HUNTER BROWN**  
Pastor for Youth

## **Ways to pray for and encourage our High School students after camp:**

- Pray that God will help the youth keep their energy and spirits up after camp!
- Ask God to strengthen the students each day as they find opportunities to share Christ's love.
- Ask the High Schoolers about their camp experience!  
(Especially if you see them wearing their "In the Garden" shirts)
- Encourage the youth to sign up for camp next year!

***"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?"***  
– Psalm 8:3-4 (NIV)





A big **thank you** to  
each of our sponsors  
for all your hard work  
and your dedication  
to serve our church  
and students:

Kelsey Brown  
Luke Brown  
Kathryn Clark  
Mike Greenfield  
Patti Greenfield  
Dina Griffin  
Avery LaCroix  
Matt Preston





# MINISTRY SPOTLIGHTS:

## CITY LIGHT

Community Ministries

**SUNDAY BREAKFAST: 650**

**COMMUNITY BREAKFAST: 729**

**COMMUNITY LUNCH: 2,424**

**PRODUCE: 609**

**VOLUNTEER HOURS: 440**

**SHOWERS: 332**

**CLOTHING ITEMS: 403**

**CALLS AND VOICEMAILS: 483**

**MAIL CHECKS: 352**

**FRONT DESK WALK-INS: 3,264**

**DINING ROOM WALK-INS: 2,912**



## FLC

Family Life Center



**PARTY PACKAGES: 36**

**FITNESS CENTER USES: 250**

**NEW FITNESS MEMBERS: 8**

**FITNESS CLASSES: 22**

**SERENITY HOUSE: 365**

**FULL BUILDING RENTALS: 10**

**WALK-INS: 1,157**

**SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS: 16**

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. 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.



# MINISTRY OF COUNSELING AND ENRICHMENT

The Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment continues to be a therapeutic ministry where people are welcomed from phone call to exit. One of the most difficult aspects about individuals receiving counseling services is making an appointment and arriving for the first session. Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment (MOCE) is unique in that when a person calls, they are able to hear a warm voice on the phone that is ready to listen and instruct regarding next steps. When a person arrives, they are welcomed by caring individuals who see it as part of their ministry to show the love of Christ through kindness and compassion to all who enter.

We are extremely grateful to Office Manager, Tina Hoffman, Billing and Credentialing Specialist, Velma Virgen, and Administrative Assistant, Susan Draper. MOCE is fully staffed and ready to welcome those who are seeking help and healing of all kinds.

July is National Minority Mental Health Month. The goal of this month is to raise awareness to the obstacles that racial and ethnic minorities may encounter when seeking mental health services. According to the FDA, obstacles include a lack of health insurance, less access to treatment, and stigma.

First Baptist Church continues to give faithfully so that the Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment can fulfill the mission of providing mental health services, regardless of an individual's background or ability to pay. Please be in prayer that MOCE would continue to decrease obstacles so more people have access to mental health services in the Big Country.



Thank you to the Ministry of Counseling Board for this yummy and festive treat!

They continue to encourage and support the MOCE staff in many ways!



**ELYA WHITTEN**  
Director of Ministry of  
Counseling and Enrichment

# CHURCH-WIDE RACER & BAKE SALE

*"Drivers, Start Your Engines!"*

"Drivers, Start Your Engines"! Ok, well we may not actually have engines on our newly sanded & decorated cars we will race for our Church-Wide Racer & Bake Sale, but for those of us who worked on the racers for this event, it is just as exciting as those car races we see on TV.

If that is not exciting to you, maybe the aroma of the baked goods that will be in the bake sale will help peak your interest. Whatever it is, I know I am looking forward to Wednesday, July 9, when we will gather at the Family Life Center to enjoy our Annual Church-Wide Racer & Bake Sale.

With this being a church-wide event, we will have 2 divisions of races: children (through completed 5th grade) & youth/adult.

We are asking everyone to build a new car from one of the kits we have at church, so this will put everyone on an equal playing (or racing) field! Everyone will need to use the wheels that are provided and all cars must weigh 5 ounces or less. We will weigh each car the night before the races (weights can be put on at that time if desired).

Cars for children (through 5th grade) will be provided at no cost. Youth and adults will be able to purchase a car kit for \$10. You may come to the church office to choose your car style and pay for your car.

This night will not merely have races going on, as we will also have a bake sale with all homemade items. Money collected will be given to the Missions' office to help with mission trips this summer. If you would like to bring a homemade item for the bake sale please bring it to the FLC at 5:00 pm on the 9th.

There will be awards for fastest cars as well as best decorated, most creative, and most unique cars, following the races.

**We hope you will join us on Wednesday evening, July 9, for this fun night with the FBC family and help us as we support such a wonderful mission project.**





# OUR NEIGHBORS WITHOUT HOMES

When we think of homelessness, we often picture someone on the street holding a sign—but the truth is far more personal, far more humane. Many of our neighbors live in a constant state of uncertainty. They don't know where their next meal is coming from. They don't know if the weather will be survivable. They don't have a safe or private place to use the bathroom. They are tired. They are hungry. They are people. They are God's people, whom God has told us to feed and love. John 21:16–17

Some are working every single day—doing everything they can to hold onto the small shelter they still have. Many are parents wondering how to feed their children. Some are older adults who are struggling with mobility or how to receive medical treatment or supplies. Their lives are a daily balancing act of survival.

Am I afraid of them?

Absolutely not.

I consider them our neighbors.

Are they cranky sometimes? Yes—but wouldn't you be if you had to live in defense mode at every moment of your life?

These are people just like you and me—Ricky, Kathy, Amilia, Tim, Betty, Greg, Manny, and Terry. Real names. Real lives. Real stories. And my prayer is that we all start praying for each of them—some by name if we can. My heart's desire is that we begin to treat every person with dignity and respect. They need our love. They need our prayers. And yes, they need our presence.

If you want to truly get to know them—not just see them but know them—I invite you to come serve at the front desk at City Light. We are currently short-handed, and I would love for you to be part of this ministry. You can help hand out mail, assist with the clothing closet, or distribute bus passes. But more than that, you'll have the chance to offer a kind word, a warm smile, and a personal connection.

Come meet them. Come love them. Come see our neighbors.  
Come, be the hands and feet of Christ.



**BETH YOUNG**

Director of Community Ministries at City Light

# mens MINISTRY UPDATE

by Phil Brown

On June 19, the Men's Ministry hosted the inaugural Brown Bag Luncheon in our church dining room. Forty-four men gathered for fellowship and to hear McMurry University head football coach, Jordan Neal, share his story and his challenge for us to become leaders of our families and our church.



**Brown Bag Luncheons will be a monthly event with the next scheduled for Thursday, July 17 from 12:00–1:00 p.m. Watch for more details. All men are welcome, not just FBC members, so join us and bring a friend.**

## JULY FLOUR & SUGAR DRIVE

It is time once again for the July Flour & Sugar Drive. The need is growing as the strain of meeting the needs of those less fortunate increases. Our goal is 7,800 lbs. of flour and 6,200 lbs. of sugar. The funds donated to this drive should be designated for the ABA Social Ministries Flour and Sugar Drive. Donations can be made in Sunday School Departments, the church office, or in the boxes located at the church entrances. Funds are preferred as they can be used over the next six months to purchase additional amounts as needed.



# PAWS FOR PEOPLE

## Roy Jones



Paws for People, FBC's unique pet therapy training mission, is almost as old as the church itself -- in dog years, that is.

About 125 dog years ago (okay, 18 calendar years), retired schoolteacher and dog lover Linda Sikes (now Chisholm) started the program to train dogs and their handlers so that they could visit sick and shut-in FBC members.

All 10 of the dogs from that first class in 2007 have "crossed over the Rainbow Bridge"(passed away) but not before providing comforting visits to patients in hospitals, residents of senior living homes, and elderly homebound members.

Over the years, because of liability issues (no, we didn't bite anyone!) hospitals and nursing homes have required more and more training and vet the dogs carefully. Paws for People graduates are particularly welcome once they have received the American Kennel Club's Good Citizen Award, signifying the highest training. Since last September, Linda has seen 10 more of the PFP graduates receive the AKC award and begin visiting Hendrick Medical Center's hospitals and hospice center, as well as welcoming assisted living centers.

Linda has lost count of dogs in the program, but each class is limited to 10 dogs, and she teaches 4-5 classes a year at the University Place. The next

class begins in September. For more information call Linda at (325)725-1741. There's no charge for the classes. New pastor Dr. Ray Miller's admission that he is an Oklahoma University fan prompted Roy Jones to recall his first Paws for People visit:

"Molly, a golden retriever, was the first of four of our dogs to earn the AKC Good Citizen Award. As a diehard University of Texas fan, I had a burnt orange collar and leash for Molly," Roy said.

"In our first visit to a memory care center I was beginning to wonder if we had come to the wrong room. The woman was downright hostile. "That's a beautiful dog you've got but I don't care for the collar and leash," she said.

She went on to complain that her family



had put her in the home against her will and that the worst part was not being able to bring her dogs. Seeking to salvage the visit, Roy asked what kind of dogs she had.

"Boston terriers," she said.

"Those are good dogs," Roy said. "What are their names?"

"Boomer and Sooner," she answered. That explained her hostility!

# JULY

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

July 11, 3 years

**DOMINIQUE LEE**

*GLO Teacher*

July 17, 2 years

**AMANDA PEREZ**

*GLO Teacher*

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

June 2025

<b>Budget</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Required	\$317,010	\$1,680,110
Given	\$285,721	\$1,600,551

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



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
CHURCH • ABILENE

1333 North 3rd, Abilene, TX 79601  
[fbc@fbcabilene.org](mailto:fbc@fbcabilene.org) | 325-673-5031  
[www.fbcabilene.org](http://www.fbcabilene.org)

- 9** Church-Wide Racer & Bake Sale @ FLC
- 10-15** McAllen Mission Trip
- 14** Youth Lunch Bunch @ Fazoli's  
Kids Splash Kingdom Trip (K-5th grade)
- 15** Finance Committee Meeting
- 17** Youth Day @ Lake Cabin
- 19** VOCl Concert
- 20** VOCl to sing in morning worship  
All Church @ Flying Bison Baseball Game
- 21** MOCE Board Meeting  
Youth Lunch Bunch @ Turtleman's
- 22** GLO Board Meeting
- 23** Preschool Movie Day  
Hospital Visitation Team Meeting
- 25** Youth Six Flags Trip
- 27** Reception for Matt Cook
- 28** Youth Lunch Bunch @ Raising Cane's (South)
- 30** LAST Summer Fun Night @ FLC
- 31** Youth to Free Play Arcade