

FIRSTwords

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

FAITH IN ACTION

by Dana Pearson

I once heard John Moore say that he believed if Jesus walked the streets of Abilene, Texas, He would attend church at City Light. Those words came back to me this past Sunday morning when the 6th Grade Girls' Sunday school class, which Laurie Irby and I have the privilege of teaching, had the opportunity to help serve breakfast and lead the morning worship service at City Light. Every girl had a role: special music during breakfast was provided by Maddi and Avery singing along with 7th grader, Emma, who played the guitar and piano. Madison (granddaughter of Lynn, who has been an integral of the City Light ministry for many years) gave the welcome, followed by Avery who gave the opening prayer. Maddi, Calli, Cynthia Grace, Samantha, and Avery read scripture which pertained to the message delivered by Taylor. Following the message, Monique gave the offertory prayer and, as the offering basket was passed by Monique and Madison, Cynthia Grace and Samantha performed a saxophone/flute duet. Coloring pages, provided by Sydney Faith, were enjoyed by all through-out the service.

It would be difficult to judge which was more moving, the sweetness of the girls as they shared their gifts or the response from the congregation. Following the message, John asked the group if anyone had words of encouragement or advice for the girls. One woman told of how God healed the damaged relationship between her and her elderly stepmother, encouraging the girls to never lose hope that God would answer prayers. A gentleman shared a favorite memory of when he too was in the 6th grade and he, along with others, expressed admiration for the courage the girls showed in being able to get up in front of a group. Others stressed the need for the girls to choose their friends wisely...to stay in school...to put God first in their lives...to never forget that they are important to God...and finally, to never lose their voice. Next week, when we review our City Light experience, we'll talk about those words and what they mean, and we'll remember the PEOPLE and how we're different and yet the same. We'll recall the experience of joining hands for the traditional City Light Benediction of singing "We Are One in the Bond of Love," and we'll talk about John Moore's words. Laurie and I think the girls will agree: If Jesus walked the streets of Abilene, He would indeed attend church at City Light.



JUNE 2019



FIRST BAPTIST
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FOR THE JOURNEY

Mary and I moved four times in our first twenty-years of ministry. What a journey we have experienced together. I have this amazing sense of providence that God kept His angels up late at night delivering me from destruction and charting out a destiny for us. I am overwhelmed with gratitude as I look back over those years. We faced difficult decisions in our moves to venture out into "...lands we knew not of." (Genesis 12:1) Moves and changes from the familiar brings risks. I confess that one of the moves turned out to be more challenging than I had ever anticipated. It tested my faith and health. Yet, God always provided, especially through special friends who walked with me.

I pray you have experienced the mysterious ways God leads and charts out a destiny for us. Perhaps your way included difficulties and even detours. I hope you can say with gratitude that you are where you are today because of God's grace and guidance. Think of old Joseph from the Bible. He was pitched into a pit by his brothers, sold into slavery, and unjustly sent to prison. (Genesis 37-45) Yet, in the end, Joseph said about all of the events of his life, "What was meant for evil, God intended for good to accomplish His purpose." Wherever you are, I invite you to consider in the twisting turns of your life, God has always been working His good and purpose.

I think back to the decision to move to Abilene twenty-four years ago. We were well settled in Louisville. Mary had a great job. Jeremy was going to be a senior in high school and involved in sports and music. Natalie was entering middle school. Yet, we felt a sense of promise to come. I have thought at times, what if I had said, "no" to God's call to leave the comfortable and go? Our lives would be so very different. So many opportunities and relationships would have never been realized.

One of the benefits of our four moves in those first twenty-years came in going through the junk we no longer needed. It was helpful to have those moves to

decide what to keep and what to discard. It was much better than the hassle of a garage sale.

It has been a long time since we have been through that process of sorting out all of the things we have accumulated. After twenty-four years in the same house, we are downsizing. We are moving and it has been hard to leave this house with so many memories. We are leaving a two-story house and big backyard for one floor and a zero-lot-line. This move has required us to decide in the words of Ecclesiastes, "There is a time to keep and a time to throw away." Yet, even when we aren't moving to new house, we need to face the spiritual question of "what to keep and throw away."

The point of my parable-story is to trust in God's goodness, guidance, and grace. The Lord is always leading and guiding, working for His good and purpose. God found a way to lead me to Abilene and you - my cup overflows. Yet, whether moving across town or to another state, stay vigilant to what you need to keep or throw away.

I'm not talking about the clutter which resides in attics, garages, or closets, but the old stuff in our souls. Throw away the junk of regret, guilt, worthlessness, and shame which has been taking up space. Keep the promises of grace, hope, and that you are God's beloved. We need to always be moving spiritually.... I wonder if we have lived too long in the same place. This summer, Mary and I are moving across town. I pray it is more than to a new address. It might be time for all of us to do some moving and deciding what to keep and what to throw away.

This summer, a time to move on...for all of us.

2019 Summer

*Ready or not,
summer is here!*

For most students, that phrase is a welcome relief from the grind of school. For some parents, it means an adjustment in the daily routines with students being home all day. For teachers, well I figure you can guess.....

For the church, it means we have a wide variety of fun activities and opportunities to fellowship with one another as we grow together in Christ. The summer kicks off with Vacation Bible School beginning on Monday morning, June 3 and ending on Thursday, June 6. This year's theme is "In the Wild" where the church will be transformed into a variety of exotic habitats. This is a great opportunity for you to have not only your children involved, but invite some friends as well.

Sunday night, June 9, we will have our traditional start of summer pool party at Hardin-Simmons University where swimming and burgers will abound. Swimming is not required, but having a good time is! Speaking of having fun, "Fun Night at the FLC" starts on June 12 with BBQ sandwiches at 5:30 p.m. and then lots of activities for you to pick and choose from.

Camps and Mission trips will take up several of the weeks during the summer. Middle and High School students each have a camp planned in June and then the children head out the end of July. Mission trips to Macedonia and McAllen are planned, as well as an "in-town" trip for our youth.

Of course, we will continue to gather each Sunday for Bible study and worship and know that out of those times other opportunities for growth and fellowship will occur. So, I hope you are ready for a great summer!

Family MISSION TRIP

JULY 11-20 & JULY 21-27

**TIME IS GETTING CLOSE AND
WE NEED MORE HELP!**

Mission Trip to McAllen 2nd week - July 20 to 27

We will be working with Buckner to build a home the second week of the Family Mission Trip to McAllen, TX. If you would like to be a part or have questions, please contact Melinda in the missions' office at 325-675-8112.

WE BOUGHT A CHURCH

Several years ago, there was a movie titled, “We Bought a Zoo.” It was the story of a journalist who after the untimely death of his wife, moves with his two children to a wildlife park and tries to make a go of it. He is asked many times, what are you going to do with this?

The front page of the Saturday, May 18, 2019 edition of the Abilene Reporter-News stated, “1st Baptist Buys 1st Christian Site.” The very well written article shared great information about both churches and how both would be making changes because of the purchase.

Obviously 1st Christian will be moving away from the place they called home since 1921. Please continue to pray for their transition as they seek to determine what the next step looks like for them.

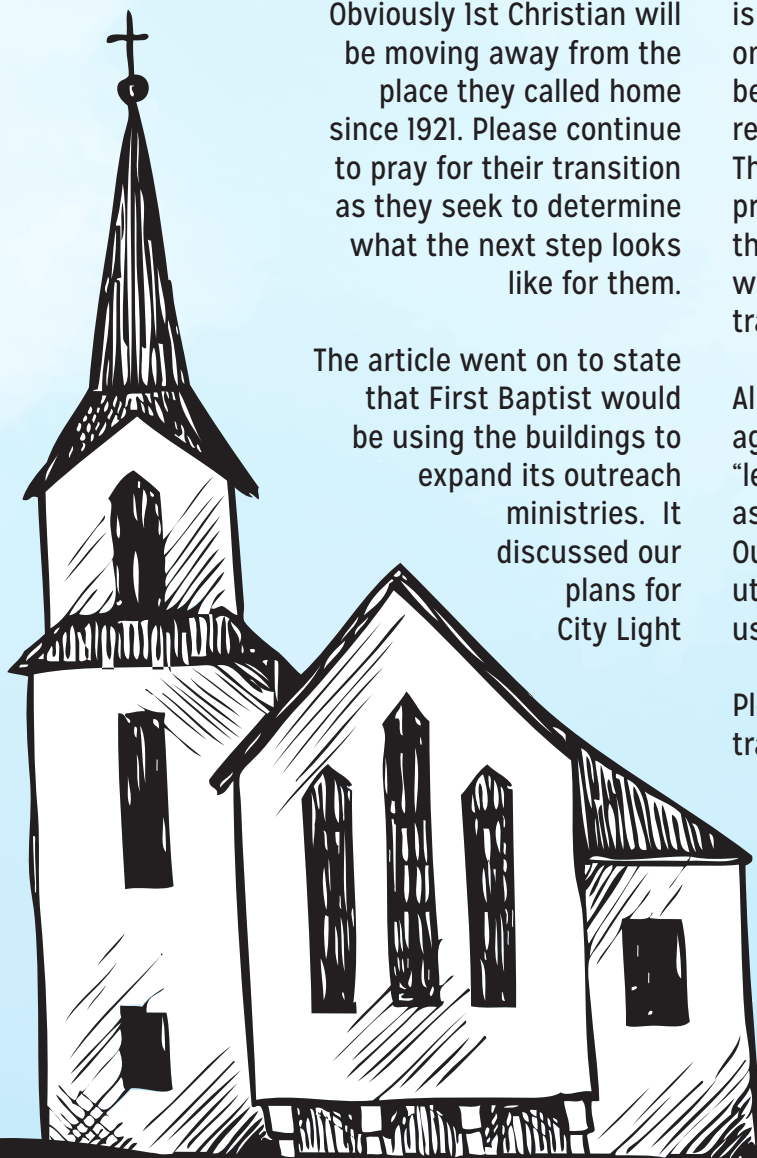
The article went on to state that First Baptist would be using the buildings to expand its outreach ministries. It discussed our plans for City Light

and GLO, as well as some of the other ideas we have discussed. Overall, it was a positive story about what God has led us to pursue.

So, the most often asked question I hear now is, what do we do now? Well simply put, we plan. Before we can just go off and start making changes, we have to know what needs to be changed and what we want the end result to be. We had a Feasibility Team elected by the church who guided us up to the vote. They were tasked with helping us make a decision. So, their job is done. Now we will be going back to the Committee on Committees to fill a Transformation Team who will be tasked with overseeing the design, construction/remolding, and utilization of the new property we own. This team will be voted on when the slate is ready to present. We also will be getting everything ready for the Capital Campaign, which will kick-off in the fall as we seek to supply the necessary funds to make the transformation possible.

All of that will take some time and a part of the agreement with First Christian was that they could “lease” the spaces they currently use as we plan and as they make decisions about where they go from here. Our “lease” is rent-free, but they will take care of the utilities and custodial needs of the areas they will be using.

Please continue to pray for both churches as we transition and seek God for direction.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IS HERE!



There will be a little more activity, or might we say a lot more activity, around FBC than usual Monday,

June 3 through Thursday, June 6 as we will have children ages 4 through those who have completed 5th grade each morning for Vacation Bible School.

We will start every morning at 9 a.m. and end at noon on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. On

Thursday we will extend our day for half an hour and conclude the week with our final Worship Rally and program. The Final Worship Rally will

begin Thursday at 11:45 a.m. and will be finished by 12:30 p.m.

This year, we will experience many "Amazing Encounters with Jesus" while we are "In the Wild." We will start each morning in the sanctuary with a Worship Rally at Panoramic Point and then break into age groups where we will go to Bible Study at the Watering Hole,

Missions on the Pachyderm Path, Recreation in the Beluga Bay, Music in Bullfrog Bog, Crafts at the Cockatoo Canopy, and of course Snacks in the Grizzly Gulch!

We ask you to be in prayer for the many children and volunteers who will be involved. We ask specifically that you pray for: the children who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; for those who already have made Him their Lord and Savior to grow in their walk; the volunteers who are leading Bible study & missions as they speak the words God puts on their hearts; the ones leading music and recreation to have patience with the children, as these times are very active, yet very meaningful to many; those leading crafts and that the activities they have for the children will help bring understanding especially for those children who need to see rather than just hear; those who provide the snacks for us, as eating and fellowshiping together can be such an important part of being a community of believers; and the leaders who walk, talk, and listen to the children as they go to each area.

Thank you for being a church who not only prays for events such as VBS, but continues to invest in the lives of children and their families.

FBC UNIFIED MISSIONS OFFERING 2019

We can change the world one community at a time!

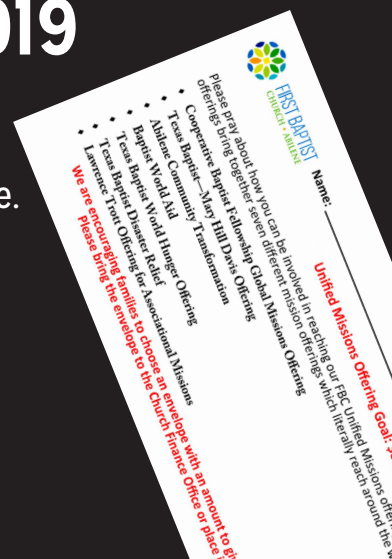
The Unified Mission offering is seven mission offerings combined into one.

Please pray about how you can be involved in reaching our goal

Unified Missions Offering of \$80,000.

WE HAVE MET TO DATE \$20,174

You may pick up an envelope in the welcome center and place it in the offering plate or bring by the church office.



ACTING IN *love*

CITY LIGHT CULINARY ACADEMY *by Vicki Brady*

I want to make members of First Baptist Church aware of how our church, through the City Light Culinary Academy, is changing lives.

I am a teacher of students who are blind and visually impaired. We recently had a career day for these students to explore possible occupations and the training necessary to reach their goals. We visited various colleges in Abilene, but were not able to find a school which offered training in culinary arts, an area of interest for many of our students. This is where First Baptist Church stepped in to allow our students the opportunity to experience being real chefs through the teaching of employment skills.

Chef Kay from the City Light Culinary Academy graciously agreed to provide an opportunity for our students to learn "hands-on" skills while preparing a delicious meal for themselves and their teachers. Her first academy was just beginning, and she could have easily and understandably declined, but she graciously went over and beyond to create this beautiful experience. She allowed our students to participate fully in every step necessary to prepare a delicious meal of lemon chicken in cream sauce with pasta. She lovingly and patiently taught these students with dignity and respect. Kayleen Mills transformed the City Light conference room into a working kitchen with complete stations for all students to have all the necessary tools to prepare their meals start to finish. Chef Kay gave them a full understanding of culinary terms and food safety techniques. She made sure they had success being real chefs. The teachers were also interested and excited to learn new things and were in awe of the generosity and knowledge of our church and its staff.

I wish every member of First Baptist Church could have witnessed the excitement and learning that went on at City Light Culinary Academy last Friday. These future chefs felt proud, confident, and thrilled to replicate the skills they learned in their culinary class. This is not the first time our church has supported these students. They participated in the Iron Chef Cooking Challenge last fall at the Family Life Center and were able to expand on the skills they learned there. These students and their teachers feel love and acceptance from a church who moves beyond its doors to minister to all people in our community. Lives are being transformed.

I am so proud and thankful to be part of a church who lifts up people from all walks of life. I am grateful my church steps up to help people who are often overlooked. I thank God I am a part of First Baptist Church and am honored to share in this beautiful mission to minister to people throughout our community. Thank you, First Baptist Church, from the bottom of my heart, for allowing your outreach programs to provide opportunities for my students and their teachers to feel God's love through you.





I agree with the writer and pastor, Trevor Hudson, as he reflects on listening to the struggles of people. The common thread is a search and longing for peace, even when life is going well. Did you know that even pastors struggle with guilt, work, family, and have a deep longing for peace?

As we face our common conflicts, I want to offer you a simple prayer which has changed countless lives. It is known as the Serenity Prayer. Many people are familiar with the shorter version of the prayer which appears on bookstore plaques. Yet, the challenge is moving those powerful words from hanging on the wall to giving us hope in our hearts. Most people identify this prayer with Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve-Step recovery program. Even if you have never attended an AA meeting, this prayer can help us with our own issues of addiction

to find peace in the midst of our hurried, hassled, and hectic lives.

We are familiar with the shorter version of this simple prayer and pathway to serenity and peace.

***God, grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.***

But did you know there is the longer version of the prayer, filled with spiritual wisdom and practical insight? The longer version of the prayer continues to call us to courageous living:

***Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time,
accepting hardship as the pathway to peace,
taking as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
You forever in the next.***

If you are searching for a deeper peace in your life and struggles, you are invited to join us in worship during this series, ***"Summer of Serenity."*** We will look at the story behind the prayer and discover how we can apply it. As Dallas Willard writes: *"Serenity is a side effect of finding a good place to dwell.... The Serenity Prayer is a doorway into such a safe dwelling place. It brings us into the path of life with the living God and abundant living."*

JUNE 2	<i>God Grant Me the Serenity... To Accept the Things I Cannot Change - Acts 20:22-24</i>
JUNE 9	<i>Courage to Change the Things I Can... Wisdom to Know the Difference - Isaiah 43:18-19; John 14:25-27 - Pentecost Sunday</i>
JUNE 16	<i>Living One Day at a Time... Enjoying One Moment at a Time - Matthew 6:9-13; James 4:13-17</i>
JUNE 23	Mike Greenfield preaching, Communion Sunday
JUNE 30	Dr. Bob Ellis preaching
JULY 7	Guest Preacher
JULY 14	<i>Accepting Hardship as the Pathway to Peace - 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; James 1:2-4</i>
JULY 21	Matthew Broyles preaching, Communion Sunday
JULY 28	<i>If I Surrender to His Will - Proverbs 2:1-6; 3:5-6</i>
AUGUST 4	Steve Queen preaching
AUGUST 11	<i>That I May Be Reasonably Happy in This Life - Philippians 4:10-13</i>
AUGUST 18	<i>Supremely Happy with Him Forever - Revelation 21:1-4</i>

MACEDONIA MISSIONS

Please join us in praying for
our mission team going to
Macedonia, June 7-16.

Kathy Shackelford, Susan Pigeon,
Marcus Driggers,
Ruth Anna Driggers, Ken Brown,
Martha Brown, Betty Coffey,
Emma Griffin, and John Moore

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

June 1, 18 years
Judy Santibanez
GLO Teacher

June 24, 27 years
Jeanne Jowers
Church Accountant

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

May 2019

Budget	May	Year-to-Date
Required	\$269,000	\$1,415,005
Given	\$226,727	\$1,444,467

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

EVENT CALENDAR: JUNE

- 1 HSU Day @ Rangers Ballpark
Eddie Jordan Basketball Tournament/
Fundraiser
- 2 Personnel Committee
- 3-6 Vacation Bible School
- 6 Father's Day BBQ for Men @ Lyndale
- 7-16 Macedonia Mission Trip
- 11 Rockin' Moms
- 12-16 Middle School Camp
- 12 Summer Fun Nights @ FLC begin
Buildings & Grounds Committee
- 17 Children's Trip to Splash Kingdom
AMTA Showcase Concert
- 18 Finance Committee
Deacons' Meeting
- 19 GLO Board Meeting
- 21 GLO Circus Day
- 22 Hawthorne Chorus Concert
- 23-28 High School Camp
- 23 FLC Board
- 30 Patriotic Service



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