CONNECT MAGAZINE





A HIGHER RESOLVE

Decades ago, while examining the call and journey of Abraham, one particular author noted that while the patriarch of our faith moved from pagan Ur toward God's promised land of Canaan, some of his family, including Abraham's father, stopped halfway, settling down in Haran, the land of comfort. There they lived and died, never knowing what might have been if only they had pressed on to Canaan.

Without much effort, the cultural gap between the Ancient Near East and today is easily updated. It's a true picture of mankind in every age. When we seek to divide people, on the basis of where they are spiritually, we tend to do so on two levels, good and bad. Beyond such simplistic generalizations, however, there is a more accurate portrayal of human existence and where it chooses to dwell. There has always been an Ur of the Chaldeans, where a godless paganism is dominant, giving no heed to the thought of a Creator and one's responsibility before Him.

At the other end of the spectrum is Canaan, the Promised Land, the final and victorious place of arrival for those who journey by faith, like Abraham, away from a place that is known to a place of not knowing. It is a path of endurance, filled with mystery, uncertainties, failures, successes, enlightenment, unfolding revelations, and a growing trust

"...it is a unique opportunity for the church to shine and stand forth as a people of higher resolve"

in and dependence upon God.

In between, however, there is another land—Haran. Haran is a place of arrested development. It is the cemetery of buried hopes, faded visions, and compromised ideals. Tragically, a great many waste away and die in this place. And, unfortunately, in one way or another, we all know something about Haran.

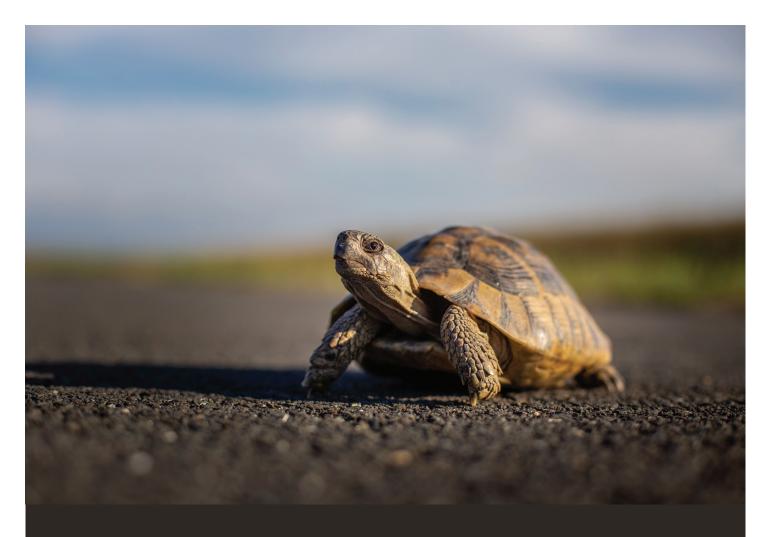
The new year is always a good time to assess and take a position check on one's life. As a family, as individuals, as a congregation, what about our hopes, visions, ideals, and development? Have we found Haran to be a more desirable place than Canaan to dwell and finish out our lives? We quickly recognize such settling in the lives of others, but what about ourselves?

In a culture that commends mediocrity and accommodates the whiny, it is a unique opportunity for the church to shine and stand forth as a people of higher resolve. Let that be our resolution.

BOBBY DAGNEL
PASTOR

HAPPY SLOWING!

OR HOW I LEARNED TO RUTHLESSLY ELIMINATE HURRY



Slowing? YES!

This is the season of NEW...everywhere we turn we are being "encouraged" to add a workout membership, get a personal trainer, read more books, work harder, get smarter, etc., and all of that adds up to doing MORE than we did last year!

I have an alternative suggestion. This past semester I was privileged to walk alongside several folks in our church in a study that centered around a book entitled, The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry. I confessed to them that it was a painful study because I LOVE to hurry. I always have! But now, I'm striving to put

some practices in my life that slow me down so that I can experience the life God has for me, the life God directs me to live. During this time of self-examination I have found it very difficult to see and experience Him if I'm whizzing past the encounters He places in my path.

Here are some of the key things we learned together:

- **1)** In order to really grow as Christfollowers we need to "ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives!"
- **2)** Hurry is the greatest enemy of our life with Jesus in our culture.
- **3)** Both sin and busyness have the same effect—they cut you off your connection to God.

God built time to rest, to reflect, to slow down, even, into the very fabric of our lives when He crafted and shaped and molded everything in all creation and then rested. Now we know God didn't get tired or worn-out (we do, but He definitely does not), but He took the time to enjoy what He had done (and what he had done so incredibly, so



KEN DRAUGHON
ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR
MUSIC & WORSHIP

perfectly, so gloriously). He paused. And He has said we should do the same: "Remember (honor, observe, practice) the Sabbath..." which literally means "to rest," and it's very hard to rest if you don't slow down, isn't it?

I love how Mark Buchanan, a pastor and writer from Canada, framed this:

The Exodus command [to Sabbath], with its call to imitation, plays on a hidden irony: we mimic God in order to remember we are not God. In fact, that is a good definition of Sabbath: imitating God so that we stop trying to be God. –from The Rest of God

So, as we start a new year together, with all the brimming opportunities, let's do something radically different. Let's build in some rest, some specific slowing so we can dive deeply into God's word, spend time with Him in concentrated, uninterrupted prayer, and walk WITH Him through the ups and downs that will surely come. As we do, we will start to look more and more like our good, good God instead of trying to BE Him, which is, of course, utterly impossible!

And as we, together as a church family, become more and more like Him, maybe, just maybe our lives will be more and more characterized by, "...love that overflows, peace that subdues, patience that endures, kindness in action, a life full of goodness, gentleness of heart, and strength of spirit."

(Galatians 5:22 TPT)

Happy Slowing!

"I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

Matthew 25:36-40



JERRY RAMIREZ
MINISTER OF GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Our 2023 Christmas Store is now in the books, and I'm pleased to say our church family served our community well by providing Christmas gifts for over 40 families.

The greatest joy for me was observing our guests and church family interacting at the beginning of the evening and at the end of the service. Thank you! And thank you for the value you place on the individuals we serve.

Christmas gifts may not fall into the category of clothing or feeding, according to Matthew 25, but the love that was shown to our guests and the joy on the children's faces were priceless. Regardless of how, this passage calls us to extend compassion to those around us.

The Christmas store was just a small glimpse of how our church loves others through words, financial support, and by service to our community. There are several upcoming events that need your prayers and support:

Belize Medical Mission Trip

Pray for our team that will be on mission in Belize on January 14-19. Our team will be doing a medical clinic for four days.

Kenya Mission Trip

Our church family will be serving at Naomi's Village, an orphanage located in Nairobi. Our trip departs on Saturday, May 25 and returns Sunday, June 2. The cost is \$3750, which includes airfare from Lubbock, transportation, lodging, meals in Nairobi, and a one-day safari. Participants will be responsible for meals while traveling, the price of EVISA, and any souvenir purchases.

To register for the trip you will need to pay your \$1000 deposit, and you will receive the registration link. FBC Members, if you pay a \$1000 deposit by January 15, 2024, your cost will be \$2250. Contact Jerry Ramirez for more information.

Guatemala Water Well Mission Trip

September 22-28, 2024. Mark the date on your calendar and make plans to join us.

VOUCHER MINISTRY VOLUNTEER HELP WANTED

Our Voucher Ministry takes place each week on Thursday's from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM. We need help to serve in this great ministry. For more information, please contact the Global Mission's Office at 806-747-8153.



338 88 8 8 B

"He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him." (John 1:7)

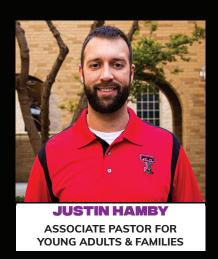
John begins his Gospel by describing Jesus, and he does so by using two metaphors for Jesus: the Word, and the Light. In the middle of providing the reader a clear understanding of Jesus' divine nature, John pauses to introduce another with whom he shares a name. John the Baptist, we're told, was sent by God to act as a witness to this Light (Jesus) coming to man (John 1:6-8). This awesome responsibility was uniquely his prior to Jesus becoming flesh and dwelling among man (John 1:14). However, that baton has been passed and shared among any who have met and believed in this great Light, who is Jesus. In fact, Jesus would use the word 'witnesses' to describe his followers before his ascension to heaven in Acts 1:8.

As we leave the Christmas season and celebrated the coming of Christ, we are now left somewhat like the disciples as Jesus ascended in Acts 1. What now? My encouragement to you is to carry on the commandment of Jesus in the style of John the Baptist — Be a witness! In fact, this is how our staff thinks

through and plans our calendar and events. We consider this great task of reflecting the light of Jesus which we ourselves have experienced and build our schedule to accomplish this very thing. So I ask you first, how might you experience the Light of Jesus in a greater way? I invite you to join in these upcoming events featured throughout this issue of the Connect. We do these things intentionally to help you grow in your connection with Jesus! Second, I ask you to think about your role as a witness of Jesus. How might you act as a mirror to those around you? Remember you are serving to reflect the light of Jesus! Happy New Year and shine bright for HIS glory!









Like many ministries at First Lubbock, every year the youth ministry reflects on the programming and efficacy of what we do. Our goal is to instill in our students the consistency of Christian living through what we teach in the classroom as well as through the example of leaders demonstrating lifelong faith for our students. The priorities we teach our youth today will impact generations tomorrow.

One of our main goals for this year as a ministry is teaching and exemplifying courage. Our students are surrounded by a culture that values appearance and perception over truth, and instilling in them courage to live out the gospel every day, not just on Sunday, is vital. They, as do we all,

need courage to become the persons God calls them to be, rather than give in to the pressures of this world.

In many ways love has become a code word for tolerating bad behavior, but it takes courage to stand for godly principles and to love people the way Christ does. We, as a church, should be encouraging our students to live with convictions and principles based on the life of Christ and as one family should be walking alongside them as they grow in their faith.

Maryann Radmacher writes, "Courage does not always roar. Sometimes it is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'" Our students need reassurance that when they fail, they can try again. The beauty of the gospel is not found in achieving perfection. The beauty of the gospel is that it doesn't accuse us, threaten death, or even bring us to despair. Therefore, we should not cower in fear when we fall short but instead continue to pursue Christ courageously.



Our **DNOW** event is Friday, February 2nd through Sunday, February 4th. This is a great opportunity for our students to invite their friends from school and enjoy a great weekend of quality teaching and fellowship, not to mention a good time! It also gives students a setting in which to exercise courage and exemplify the life-changing love and grace of God.

We have two events coming up this summer that will be pivotal in the life of our teenagers. Our **summer camp** this year will be in Glorieta, New Mexico and will be from June 17th through June 21st. This event builds a great chemistry and fellowship within our group that is important to the life of faith in our teenagers. Camp gives our students a week away from all the craziness of their schedules and builds a foundation that will empower them to have the courage Christ calls us to have for years to come.

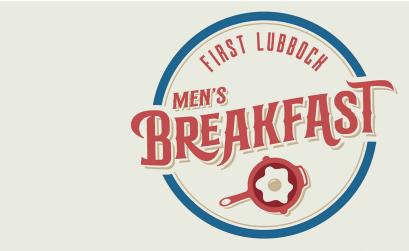
Our **168 mission trip** will be from July 7th through July 13th. This event is where our students get to put their faith into action and serve a community for a week. The students will have opportunities to serve through community service, evangelism, and good old-fashioned hard work. The value this event has for our students is boundless as it allows them to see outside of their own spheres and understand the need for Christian service.

I am so very grateful for the ministries we as a youth group get to lead and participate in and couldn't ask for a greater group of students and families to walk alongside. I can't wait to see what the Lord has in store for our group in this coming year and am proud to call this place home.



SAM AKINMINISTER OF STUDENTS





SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 7:30AM - JANUARY 20 | FEBRUARY 10 | MARCH 16





"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith,one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

-The Apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus

Our world is recklessly determined to fracture society into groups, cliques, individuals, and yet God has called His people, the Church, to be one. He's designed us to be united by the blood that makes us family - the blood of His Son, Jesus. Though we might share nothing else, our faith heritage is enough to bind us together in peace. An incredible tool given to us by God to accomplish such union is the gift of corporate singing. Allow me to explain (as briefly as I know how).

Sunday in and Sunday out, you may wonder why we give 20 minutes to Jesus-flavored music. Music provides parameters that focus the uniqueness of each participant into one cohesive expression of praise. Tempo, rhythm, melody, harmony, Biblerooted lyrics build a sanctuary for people to intentionally fix their minds' attentions, their

hearts' affections, and their bodies' activity on one common subject - the Lord, their God - allowing their differences to settle for the sake of honoring their King. Churches all over Lubbock and around the world set aside time to gather in their own buildings every Sunday, but what if I told you that churches in our city have set aside one Friday this semester to gather in one place for this unified purpose?

Yes, Friday, February 2nd at 6p, churches all over Lubbock will gather IN OUR BUILDING to sing the praises of our good God. We'll lay down our preferences, we'll give up our designated pews, we'll allow our theological differences to take a back seat as we exalt the One who matters above all, Jesus Christ. You'll see people you know and people you don't; you'll sing songs you know and songs you don't. But at the end of the day we will each count it as joy because as we sing, we get to experience a glimpse of eternity - selfless worship in love of God and others.

Make plans to join us. I'll see you there!

All City Worship is February 2nd, 2024 at First Baptist Church from 6p - 7p





JONNY HUGHES
WORSHIP & ARTS
ASSOCIATE

January is when we start our budget process for the coming year. FirstLubbock pastors and staff work very hard at forecasting the financial needs of their ministries based on giving metrics and the ever-changing dynamics of reaching people and discipling believers in their perspective areas. Throughout the year, the church business office will receive questions about our budget process. The following are 15 things we would like you to know.

WE BELIEVE IN THE STOREHOUSE TITHE.

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. Malachi 3:10

OUR BUDGET YEAR IS

April 1 – March 31.

YOUR 6IVING COUNTS!

OUR CURRENT BUDGET

is \$4,686235.29. We have met or exceeded our yearly budget amount every year since 2015. First Lubbock's giving in the last few years during Covid was unprecedented.

OUR BUD6ET

is 55% personnel and 45% programing/

YOUR CHURCH BUSINESS OFFICE WANTS YOU TO KNOW

fixed costs.
Programming includes how each mission operates along with the cost of doing

YOUR BUSINESS OFFICE INCLUDES

me, Business Administrator; Susan Fleming, Finance Director; Max Bradley, Financial Assistant/Accounts Receivable-Payable; Philip Tay, I.T.; and Anne McNeel along with Kaleigh Stilley share duties and Receptionist/ Financial Assistant.



DEAN JOHNSONBUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

business, which includes building insurance, utilities, maintenance, custodial, etc.

MIKE LINER is chairman of our Finance Ministry that meets and looks at our finances every month. Our Finance Ministry also looks at and approves each year's budget.

ALL OUR DIFFERENT MISSION AREAS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR BUDGET.

They submit their programming budgets in January of every year, and everything moves through our budgeting process. They each have access to our financial software and monitor their spending throughout the year. We believe that just because it's on paper doesn't mean it gets spent. All ministries come in under budget every year. If a need arises that is not budgeted, there is access to extra dollars in our designated accounts to meet that need.

WE OPERATE UNDER GAAP,

Generally Accepted Accounting
Principles, and have a yearly audit
that the Finance Ministry also hears.
Related to that, our business office has
standard operating procedures which
include multiple safety measures to
protect the receiving and distribution
of our tithes and offerings.

BUD6ET DOLLARS START OVER

every year. Any dollars left on the books that we did not spend are moved to a designated emergency operating fund and designated capital improvements.

WE HAVE MULTIPLE WAYS

to give to the church. Church provided envelopes in Sunday School Departments and/or offering boxes (located in the fover outside the Worship Center), cash or check in the offering boxes, walk into church business office, mail to church business office, online through our website (takes ACH from bank, all credit/ debit cards, or Shelby Give), texting "give" to 806-583-1010, contribution drafts set up through business office, make a stock transfer through the business office and charitable giving through their IRA.

WE HAVE A PERSONNEL MINISTRY

that approves salary increases every year based on giving metrics and a survey tool that we are part of with 15 other churches with similar demographics.

WHEN YOU LOOK

at our budget, which we print and make available every March, we are broken into 16 different missions. Pastoral, Global Mission, Youth, Young Adults and Families, 55+ and Pastoral Care, Business Administration, Education, Maintenance, Custodial, Food Service College, Worship and Arts, Childrens, Media, Women's and Institutional Support.

IF YOU EVER HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,

you can reach our office anytime during the week @ 806-747-0281. You can also email me, dean@firstlubbock.org.

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOUR TITHE,

your giving, your offerings, your prayers and your support.

God has blessed FirstLubbock with faithful members that continue to tithe and give to His church. Our office will continue to be faithful stewards of your giving.

Happy New Year,

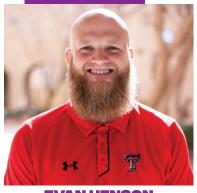
Dean

THAT'S WHY WE CONNECT

As some of you may know, I've become a student again myself. During this program, I am researching the effects of community on the epidemic of loneliness in college students. And let me assure you, it is an epidemic. College students are more connected than ever and lonelier than at any other time in history. The research and the conversations I've had with people regarding it have only further emphasized how important it is that we continue offering high-quality, meaningful opportunities for college students in the Lubbock area to connect with one another and with our church as a whole.



That's why it's inspiring when we see college students serving alongside senior adults and children alike at events like our Christmas store last month. That's why we offer weekly opportunities for college students to gather in homes and study Scripture together. That's why we continue meeting on Thursday nights to worship with college students. That's why we provide programming for our students throughout the semester that allows them to build community in such a pivotal part of their lives.



ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR UNIVERSITY LIFE

It is so encouraging to me to serve in a church that invests financially, prayerfully, and relationally in the lives of our college students. It may not always seem significant as you are building relationships, offering your home, or even your words of encouragement, but you are participating in eternal things when you partner with us on mission to college students in our area. Life change is happening in our midst through the community that is building in our college ministry. This could not happen without the support of our church. Thank you, Church!





THINK ABOUT THANKS

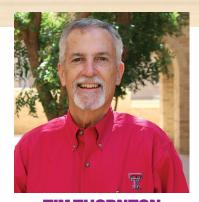
"I just called to say thanks for helping us with the Outdoor Breakfast." When we receive a "thanks" call similar to this one, it is usually very encouraging and uplifting. This is a recurring thought that floats around in my mind. "Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting." (Psalm 106:1) How often do I think about thanks without really offering it to the very ones who deserve it? The fact is, I am surrounded by many who help me every day and week. It is an unmeasurable blessing to serve the Lord through the multiple ministries of our church with you. Yes, you are amazing and filled with the Spirit.

Thanks to our Sunday School and Bible Study teachers. Thanks to those of you that are Directors, Secretaries and Outreach Leaders. Thanks for attending

Sunday School 90% of the Sundays, 50-89% or 25-49%, we love seeing you each time. What about those who volunteer in our Mission opportunities like: Lubbock Impact, St. Benedicts, Snack bag packing, Kid's Hope, Chemo Bags or laboring in our food trailer? I think about thanking each of them. The Word of Hope and Gilbert Hererra's Prison ministry are busy touching the lives of inmates in multiple locations. Thanks.

I think about the Prime Time Choir, the 8:15 service Worship Choir and the accompanists, certainly they deserve an occasional "thanks." This is a good start for my response to thinking about thanks. If you give tithes and offerings to the Lord through our church, thanks. Certainly, I would love to thank our entire staff. You are a joy to serve the Lord with.

THANKYOU



TIM THORNTON

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF
PASTORAL CARE & 55+ ADULTS

55+ ADULTS SAVE THE DATES

Each Wednesday beginning Jan 3: 10:30am Prime Time Choir, 11:30am Lunch Noon Bible Study

Jan 7 11:00am 55+ Leadership Training in Lowrie Hall

16 1:30-4:30pm 55+ Game Day Lowrie Hall

24 2-4pm 55+ Bowling at Whitewood Lanes

Feb 20 1:30-4:30pm 55+ Game Day in Lowrie Hall

28 2-4pm 55+ Bowling at Whitewood Lanes

March 3 11am 55+ Leadership Training in Lowrie Hall

19 1:30-4:30pm Game Day in Lowrie Hall

24 6pm 55+ Hymn Sing in the Chapel

27 2-4pm 55+ Bowling at Whitewood Lanes

April 16 1:30-4:30pm Game Day in Lowrie Hall

20 8-9:30am 55+ Cowboy Breakfast in the Park

24 2-4pm55+ Bowling at Whitewood Lanes

MEET OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS: JAMES MOSS

Change comes with a variety of emotions. Sometimes wonderful, sometimes devastating, and so much in between. As I attempt to fill the shoes of a very dear friend, I am experiencing a myraid of emotions. But foremost is excitement, as I am super thrilled about this new chapter as the Director of Creative Arts here at First Lubbock. It has already been fulfilling in ways I didn't realize it would or could be, even if I do experience a little "imposter syndrome" from time to time. I'm learning new things every day. I also work closely with some pretty fantastic people. However, that's not new, nor is it surprising. As one of Ken's first hires since coming to First Lubbock, I've been on staff eleven and a half years. It has been an absolute

privilege to serve alongside some of the greatest people I know in that time, and I look forward to continuing to do so...just from a different office. I will also continue to serve as orchestra lead.

One of the perks of this new role has already been made evident. I get to have a front row seat to the MANY amazing things we do as a church body. As I comb through the footage of all of you serving so graciously and so well, it's hard not to be moved. You are the embodiment of "Your mission field is where your feet are." So thank you for blessing me in that way!

As we look toward what this new year holds, I'm excited to see what you do next, and I can't wait to put it on film.



JAMES MOSS

DIRECTOR OF

CREATIVE ARTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

January

1	NEW YEAR'S DAY (OFFICES CLOSED)
3	PT CHOIR/LUNCH/BIBLE STUDY
10	MIDWEEK AT MAIN EVENT FOR YOUTH
11	MOSAIC
14	CHILI COOK-OFF
14-19	BELIZE MEDICAL MISSIONS TRIP
17	MIDWEEK BEGINS
20	MEN'S BREAKFAST
26	KIDS NIGHT OUT
28	COMMUNION AROUND THE TABLES 6PM
31	YOUTH MIDWEEK SERVE EVENING
February	
	<u> </u>
2	ALL CITY WORSHIP AT FIRST LUBBOCK
2-4	DNOW
10	MEN'S BREAKFAST
11	COLLEGE SUPER BOWL PARTY
	YOUTH SUPER BOWL PARTY
14	"GENDER DEFENDER" YOUTH
17	MOM EVENT
18	PRETEEN PLUGGED IN
23	KIDS NIGHT OUT
25	COMMUNION AROUND THE TABLES 6PM
28	YOUTH MIDWEEK SERVE EVENING
March March	
3	LISTENING ROOM 6PM
10	ONE WORSHIP (COMMUNION) 11AM
10-16	COLLEGE MINISTRY TRIP
11-15	SPRING BREAK!
16	MEN'S BREAKFAST
17	WOMEN'S EVENT
22	KIDS NIGHT OUT

March continued

- 24 HYMN SING
 PRETEEN PLUGGED IN
- 27 YOUTH MIDWEEK SERVE EVENING
- 29 GOOD FRIDAY 6PM
- 31 EASTER SUNDAY

April

- 7 WOMEN'S EVENT
- 12 OUTDOOR CONCERT = JONNY = COLLEGE (GREEN SPACE) 7AM-10PM
- 13 MEN'S CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT
- 17 KIDS IN WORSHIP 6:30PM
- 20 MOM EVENT
- 21 FAMILY DEDICATION PRETEEN EVENT
- 24 YOUTH MIDWEEK (FINAL)
- 25 MOSAIC (FINAL)
- **26 KIDS NIGHT OUT**

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS JOINING IN:

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

Joined by Baptism or Profession of Faith

> Weston Betancourt Ella Bursi Liam Nibaud Laine Riddle

Joined by Letter or Statement of Faith

Madeline Dabbert Allen Dolberry Kimberly Dolberry Jimmy Hill Karen Hill Lamar Kello Lauren Kello

First Lubbock Budget as of December 13

BUDGET REQUIRED YTD

\$3,271,522.75

BUDGET RECEIVED YTD

\$3,020,299.59

GLOBAL IMPACT MISSIONS GOAL

\$182,450.00

GLOBAL IMPACT MISSIONS RECEIEVED

YTD

\$138,107.81

LANDMARK RECEIVED YTD

\$12,832.00

ARE YOU WANTING TO BECOME A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST?

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A PART OF OUR CHURCH FAMILY?

DO YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST?

DO YOU NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

TEXT: FLRESPOND TO 833-571-3475

WE'D LOVE TO TALK
TO YOU TODAY!



First Baptist Church 2201 Broadway Lubbock, Texas 79401