



At First Glance

First Baptist Church / 211 W. Comanche, Norman, Oklahoma 73069 / 405-321-1753 / www.fbcnorman.org

Our first time to meet the Cuban pastors was at the opening worship service. When we arrived, the singing had already begun. We were struck by the passion, enthusiasm, and energy in their worship.

As we sang, the reason became clear. They were singing about their hope in Christ – their hope for eternity. They sang and prayed for the Lord to return today, not tomorrow. And in response to their worship, they worked hard to share the Good News of Jesus with all they could. The persecuted church is thriving in Cuba. In contrast, the prosperous church in America struggles to find its identity as her numbers continue to decline.

I learned that in Cuba, a typical worker makes \$20 a month plus their subsidies of rice, beans, and other staples. A package of toilet paper, if you can find it, costs about \$5. Imagine spending 25 percent of your monthly income on 4 rolls of toilet paper. Like many Cubans, you would learn to live without and you would passionately hope and cry out to God for a better future.

Of course, the church in America has hope. But, our hope is typically a response to sickness, unemployment, death, and other crises we face. Hope is seldom a way of life for us. We are content in our prosperity and while we do hope in the Lord's return, many "hope" it is not today.

May God stir our hearts with the hope of His return.

The Sounds of Christmas stir our hearts and draw our attention to the manger. During Advent, we will explore the Sounds of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that make this season so special and prepare us for the birth of the Messiah. Zephaniah 3:17 is the scripture that will shape our Advent

worship over the next weeks. Let us come with open hearts and minds as we worship and anticipate Christmas morning.



The **Sounds of Christmas devotion guide** is one way we share our Advent journey and invite others to join with us. I invite each of you to take several guides to share with your family, friends, and neighbors.

Our **Christmas Eve candlelight service** is one of the special and holy moments of the year. The sanctuary fills with the joy and laughter of the season. Families and friends reunite as they come home to share Christmas with loved ones. If you have not been to a Christmas Eve service, you have missed a blessing. I encourage you to make this holy moment part of your Christmas Eve plans. Bring a gift for Baby Jesus to place under our tree, a gift that will be shared through our community ministry.

There are many other opportunities for you to participate in the worship and activities of **The Sounds of Christmas** this year. Be sure to pick up the schedule of events bulletin.

I am often reminded how gracious and generous the members of our church are. As we begin December, let me remind you of the opportunities you have to support the ministries of our church through year-end giving. Your gifts to the Ministry Plan impact not only our church and community, but literally the world. A couple of weeks ago, I was asked to speak at the Salvation Army's Getting Ahead graduation.

These students had just completed a 20-week course hosted at our church. The goal of the course is to equip those in poverty with the tools they need to break the chains that keep them imprisoned in a life of hopelessness and despair. Your gifts to our Ministry Plan make this kind of partnership possible. And because of the way we invest part of our Ministry Plan into Community Ministry, many of those who participated in the class were already familiar with our church. This is just one example of how your offerings impact our community for Christ. There is no greater investment you can make with your regular and year-end giving.

Thank you to everyone who participated in making a nomination for our Deacon Ministry. Be in prayer for the Deacon Nominating Team as they pray and follow up. Also, be in prayer for our Deacon Ministry Team. The DMT will meet Monday, December 7 in Hallock Hall at 6:30. I appreciate the servant-leadership and participation of our deacons in the life and ministries of First Baptist.

Our ministry staff recently spent three days together at Falls Creek. We had wonderful times of conversation, silence, prayer, and fellowship with one another.

We are blessed by the staff that God has called to lead and equip us in serving one another (the Church) and the community (world) in which we live. Let me invite you to encourage and thank them over these next weeks.

The Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons offer a wonderful time to reflect. Thank you for the privilege of being your pastor. Thank you for loving Gay and the kids. Our family has been blessed to grow up as part of the FBC family. Merry Christmas. We look forward to enjoying **The Sounds of Christmas** with you.

Dr. Wade Smith

Year-end giving opportunities made available for church members

December is here. Are you tired yet? I pulled my calendar of extra events for the month and just looking at it made me tired.

I have learned to love the Christmas season, and to celebrate the birth of Jesus. But when I look at my calendar there is not much surprise why so many Christians get to December 26 and wonder why they missed Christmas. My prayer for all of us is that we take the time to be quiet, seek the face of God and experience Jesus and celebrate His birth.

Year-end generosity: As most of you know, the generosity you share with the church during November and December greatly impacts our ministry plan (budget) and missions giving. We know there are many really good causes that seek to touch your generous spirit and I hope you will

see the benefit of giving to the church.

This season provides an opportunity for you to catch up on giving and for the church to catch up on ministry plan deficiencies. We ask that you pray about your participation in this season of giving.

For your convenience, the church office will be open through mid-afternoon on **December 30**. If you are using our online giving and desire an end of year gift to count in 2015, it must be made prior to noon on **December 29**. If you mail a contribution, it must be postmarked



Roy Joe Ham

on **December 31** or before. May you be blessed in the journey and in your generosity.

If you have a last minute contribution you would like to make in person on December 31, the church's bank, Republic Bank and Trust on Main Street, has agreed to have a First Baptist Church offering bag at the teller window until 7 p.m. Any gift that is in that bag when it is counted in January will be counted as a 2015 contribution.

I pray that you and your family fully experience the Peace, Love, Joy and Hope that can fully be found in the celebration of Jesus. Merry Christmas to each of you!

It is a joy to celebrate with you.

Roy Joe Ham

Giving Tree

Until December 13, select a tag from the tree on display outside the media center.

Each gift should be around \$25.

Return the unwrapped gifts to the tree by December 13.

The gifts will be delivered to 25 families at Lincoln Elementary for Christmas.



Brown Bag Lunch



December 7
noon

Wagner Hall
on the University
of Oklahoma campus

ignite
PASSION FOR GOD'S PURPOSE

Contributions to date: \$2,956,695

Loan Balance: \$310,346

COMMUNITY

Ministry Needs

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Winter Clothing | Athletic/Work Shoes |
| Coats For Adults | Socks |
| Blankets | Gloves |
| Sleeping Bags | Canned Vegetables, |
| Men's Jeans and Pants | Meat and Fruit |

The spiritual practice of embrace

Are you like me? Do you look around at how things change between Thanksgiving and Christmas and wonder (maybe to yourself, maybe to others) why it can't be this way ALL YEAR. LONG? And by the end of the season (if you're still like me), you may wonder how you survived another Advent season.

I'd like to introduce a different kind of spiritual practice that I think has huge implications for our experience during Advent season. It's the spiritual practice of EMBRACE.

This spiritual practice helps us reach beyond ourselves and focus on the OTHER – those we know and those we do not know. If we decide that we are truly going to practice Embrace, we cannot continue living the same way. We simply cannot do it.

With Embrace, another's children have become my own, another's empty stomach has become my own, another's naked body is just as important as mine. Sympathy becomes empathy as I have found myself in another's shoes and their needs have become my own.

Can you imagine what might happen in our families if we began, or continued, to practice Embrace? What might happen at FBC Norman? What might happen in you during this Advent season?

Beware, though. There's a danger involved with this spiritual practice.



Kirk Hatcher

You will change. You cannot live the same way if you decide to fully Embrace. It might lead you to do crazy things like provide a Christmas meal for a family who doesn't have one. You might even invite a family to join you for your meal at your house. Maybe you'll babysit for someone one night, just so the parent(s) can have some free time. Perhaps you'll find a way to provide warm socks/underwear/coats for a family who needs the warmth. Above all else, maybe...just maybe, we will discover within us a love for our neighbor that we did not know was there.

I believe that the spiritual practice of Embrace can change a community. During this Advent season, let it begin with us!

Kirk Hatcher

Making Falls Creek resolutions

I don't know who made the decision, but I'm thankful for them.

Where our cabin sits at Falls Creek couldn't be more perfect. One of my favorite things to do at Falls Creek is to take my hammock, stretch it between a few trees, lay down in it and read.

One of my least favorite things to do at Falls Creek is get so busy that I forget that we have a fantastic creek right in front of our cabin.

When it's time for our students to do their quiet times, the places by the creek are prime real estate. During our free times, it always amazes me how

much time they spend by the creek. There is something about that creek that draws people in.

I find myself looking forward to those times when I can go to Falls Creek, looking forward to finally being able to read.

Then I find myself wondering why I create a world away from Falls Creek that is so busy that I feel like I've got



Rich Lubbers

more important things to read.

As I look forward to the holiday season (let me be clear: Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the looking forward to a New Year of life and ministry), I want to make an early resolution. I want to create more time to do the kinds of things that promote personal wellness. I want to force myself to re-prioritize so that I'm not so busy during this time of the year, able to spend quantity AND quality time with those I love most.

Will you join me in this resolution?
Rich Lubbers

Practices begin the week of December 14. The first games are January 9.



Church Conference and Lunch
December 6 • Cost \$2
Bring a salad and/or dessert to share



THE *Christ*

Service of Hope

A Lord's Supper service to remember and prepare for the holidays.
November 22 • 5:30 p.m. snack supper • 6:30 p.m. worship

Giving Tree

Begins November 24 and continues until December 13.
Select a tag from the tree on display outside the media center.
Each gift should be around \$25.
The gifts will be delivered to families at Lincoln Elementary.

Tree Lighting & Family Fiesta

November 29 • 6 p.m.

We will meet at the corner of Main Street
and Santa Fe Avenue for the tree lighting,
and then proceed to the FLC for food, fun and games.
Bring either homemade salsa, guacamole or a dessert.

On Mission with Operation Christmas Child

December 1-3 • Adult 55+

Mission trip to Dallas to work at the OCC Processing Center.

Christmas Parents Day Out

December 5 • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. • FLC
Children and Youth

Youth Christmas Party

December 9 • 6 p.m. • Youth Hall

Christmas Lights and More

December 11 • Adult 55+
Lunch at Miller Amish farm and Christmas lights at Rhema College.



SOUNDS OF
Christmas

Norman Christmas Parade

December 12 • 10 a.m.

Join us at Common Ground at 9 a.m. for fellowship and hot chocolate.

Christmas Concert

December 13 • 6 p.m. • Sanctuary

Childcare available for ages 3 and under.

FLC Volunteer Appreciation Banquet

December 17 • 9 a.m. • FLC

A Territorial Christmas

December 18 • 4:30 to 11 p.m.

• Pollard Theatre, Guthrie • Adult 55+

First Family Christmas Caroling

December 20 • 6 p.m. • Common Ground

No Wednesday Evening Activities

December 23

December 30

FLC and Church Office Closed

December 24 - December 25

December 31 - January 1

Christmas Eve Service

December 24 • 6 p.m.

Bring a gift to put under our tree for baby Jesus.

From reunions to Christmas lights, several activities planned

On Mission with Operation Christmas Child will be December 1-3. A group will travel to the Processing Center for Operation Christmas Child in Dallas.

A reunion celebration is scheduled for our December 9 Writing Your Life Story Class. The event will be 10 a.m. at the FLC Conference Room.

The adult 55+ ministry will take

a Christmas lights and more trip on December 11. Come celebrate 30-plus years of Mrs. Miller's home cooking on her Amish farm. She is retiring.

We will enjoy lunch



Vickie Riggs

with the Millers and the Christmas lights extravaganza of Rhema College in Broken Arrow. Transportation will be provided by motorcoach. Cost is \$48 per person. Sign-up by December 2.

A Territorial Christmas at the Pollard Theatre will be from 4:30 to 11 p.m. on December 18. Cost is \$25 plus dinner.

Vickie Riggs

Seven years of loving on Lincoln

Seven years ago our church began its partnership with Lincoln Elementary when we introduced the Kids Hope USA mentoring program to the school.

That first year Trish Rigney and I walked in with my newborn Grace and spoke to the principal about our church's willingness to work with at-risk students in their school. By the end of that school year, our mentors were working with seven students at the school. This ministry has grown, with 23 students in the program last year and nine of them "graduating" out of the program after working with their mentor for most of their time at Lincoln.

We currently have 13 Kids Hope USA students at Lincoln, with at least

two more on the way, and three mentors continuing to meet with their students in some manner as they attend middle school.

Over the years, our ministry at Lincoln also has grown as we learn new ways to help the students, families, and teachers there. We provide one or two teacher appreciation meals each school year, typically one during parent-teacher conferences and one in the spring. We have provided school supply assistance. We help with food



Angela Atkins

donations. A few years ago, we added the Giving Tree ministry as a way to help 25 Lincoln families at Christmas. The school counselor provides gift ideas (\$25 maximum) for Lincoln students and their siblings, and our church members get these gifts for the children. It is a huge blessing for these families and a way we can share the love of Christ with them.

Please check the tree (by the church library) and help us love on these kids and their families. The deadline to return the gifts is December 13 so that I can deliver them to the school that next day.

Thank you so much for your continued ministry to our neighbors at Lincoln Elementary.

Angela Atkins



ADVENT SCHEDULE
NOVEMBER 29: THE SOUND OF HOPE
DECEMBER 6: THE SOUND OF PEACE
DECEMBER 13: THE SOUND OF JOY
DECEMBER 20: THE SOUND OF LOVE
DECEMBER 24: THE SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS



The Sounds of Christmas
 Concert
 6 p.m. December 13

With special guests
 Emily Drennan-Lopez
 Hunter Birkhead
 And
 Modern Dance Arts

Remember the University Ministry in your prayers

Well, it's almost the end of 2015 and our University Students are starting to feel the mounting pressure of finals.

Each week, when we ask our Sunday LifeGroup and Wednesday night group, how we can be praying for one another, the most common request is simply, "That I can get everything done!" Often it's said in a joking tone and everyone has a laugh, but if we truly consider the situation

of modern college students, the request is legitimate.

We, as a church, can and should be praying for the students who attend FBC. Many are trying to manage their academic obligations, family commitments, ministry/church



Chris Canary

involvements, friendships and work schedules. Juniors and seniors may be somewhat used to the rhythm and difficulty of the finals season, but for the freshmen who just started in August, I imagine they're not exactly sure what to expect.

So, when you pray, remember the University Ministry and the students to which this church ministers.

Chris Canary



Deacon Ministry Team meeting
6:30 p.m.
December 7
Hallock Hall



Lord's Supper
Jan. 3
Both Services

Christmas Parents Day Out
10 a.m. to 2 p.m. December 5

Drop off your children and youth at the FLC while you go Christmas shopping

RSVP to crystalb@fbcnorman.org by December 2

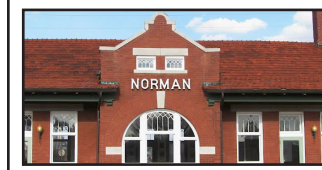


Downtowners Lunch
December 2
Noon - 1 p.m.
Cost: \$5
Speaker: Jeremy Tims,
Fellowship of Christian Athletes
Menu: Pot roast, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, dinner roll and cherry pie




No Wednesday Evening Activities
December 23
December 30

FLC and Church Office Closed
December 24 - December 25
December 31 - January 1



December Birthdays

December 1: Allison Hawkins, Terry Hearen, Joy Sullivan

December 2: Jean Callahan, Phyllis Gage, Melissa Mills, Melany Pattison, Glenn Sullivan Sr.

December 3: Stephen Burris, Lindsay Crider, Benjamin Diehm, Samuel Harp, Krystal Harrington, Jequita Uhles, Frances Welch

December 4: Lyndal Caddell, Chris Canary, Frederic Ferris, Glenda Largent

December 5: Melynda Rider, Lee Bryson, Lilia Durham, Lester Snyder

December 6: Pat Brown, Bill Geyer, Anja Hale, Hudson Harris, Alan Johnson, Bob Stone

December 7: Kristina Diamond, Marlene Fowler, Danny Heatly, Allison Taylor, Marilyn Vann

December 8: Cooper Caddell, Olivia Caddell, Cathy Gilmore, Darline Hobbs, Evelyn Parker, Jenny Smiley-Nava, Nazia Zahoor

December 9: Ruthee Danner, Madison Harner, Cerissa Keeler, Ron Mercer, Steve Owens, Renee Roe, Cayce Rogers, Jessica Rose

December 10: Vondell Wheeler

December 11: Hilda Buchanan, Darrel Curry, Brittany Harris, Ellynn Wirth

December 12: Melissa Long, Olivia Ratzlaff, Amanda Rhea

December 13: Barbara James, Joanne Stoy

December 14: Danny Foster, Dedra Redwine

December 15: Charles Frank, Judi Hartssock, Linda Heinlein, Jennifer Morgan

December 16: Margaret Brown, Shelley Ogle, Collin Russell, Kathy Strickland

December 17: Dorothy Harp, Kelsey Randall, Kaitlin Smith

December 18: Gabi Coleman, Roy Joe Ham, Scott Hawkins, Elliot Lee, David Martinez, Charles Prater, Kiersten Stewart

December 19: Steven Graham, Tristen Krush, Katie Skeel, Rodney Smith

December 20: Lou King, Betty Klima, Jennifer McMillen, Joe Theige

December 21: Amy Brown, Ed Copelin, Glenda Crider, Stephany Haxel, Jamie Jinkerson, Lucille Rachal, Sam Singleterry

December 22: Steve Carter, Allen Lack, Savannah Mitchell

December 23: David Dillon

December 24: Holly Lassetter, Robert Summers

December 25: Connie Hearen, Nic Nelson, Mark Rhea, Mary Ann Spaulding

December 26: Susan Caddell, Doris Dannehl, Marylin Woods

December 27: Dana Morris, Marge Morton, Brad Singleterry, Avery Taylor, Douglas Vaughn

December 28: Janet Hardage, Sandra Lee

December 29: Susie Conklin, Susan Hawkins, Donna Holt, Michael Rifenburg, Dana Stacy

December 30: Dr. Lavonn Brown, Charles Holt, Matt Hunt, Maddux Rifenburg, Mary Robinson, Kenton Sanders

December 31: Jay Harp, Stephanie Holderby, Lauren Satterlee, Michelle Shebester, Patrick Smith, Paul Strunk, Courtney Villanueva, Gwen Wilburn

At FIRST Glance
First Baptist Church
211 W. Comanche
Norman, OK 73069
Address Service Requested

Sympathies

The FBC Family wishes to extend sympathies to:

Family & friends of Maxine Loy at her passing

Roy & Huwanta Blasius at the

passing of Roy's sister, Edith Riddle Joyce Filipski at the passing of

her cousin, Darlene Singleton

Don & Mary Louise Symcox at the passing of Don's brother Phil

Symcox

Ellen Wood, Doug, Cecilia &

Dillon Crews and John, Katrina,

Kaylee, Braden & Connor Young at the passing of Bob Wood

Ministry Staff

Dr. Wade Smith, Pastor

pastorwade@fbcnorman.org

Roy Joe Ham, Minister of Administration

royjoeh@fbcnorman.org

Kirk Hatcher, Minister of Spiritual Formation

kirk@fbcnorman.org

Angela Atkins,

Minister of Community Ministries

angelaa@fbcnorman.org

Crystal R. Byrd, Minister to Children

crystalb@fbcnorman.org

@iheartfbckids

Chris Canary,

University Minister

canary@fbcnorman.org

Rich Lubbers, Minister to Youth

richl@fbcnorman.org

@iheartfbcmym

Vickie Riggs, Pacesetter Minister

vickier@fbcnorman.org

Chad Smith, Minister of Worship Arts/Music

chads@fbcnorman.org

Clint Taylor, Minister of Recreation and Community Outreach Ministries

clintt@fbcnorman.org

Weekly Schedule

Sunday Worship

8:30 a.m. Early Worship, Sanctuary

9:40 a.m. LifeGroups

10:50 a.m. Late Worship, Sanctuary

Wednesday

5:15 p.m. Meal

6:15 p.m. Adult Bible Studies

5:45 p.m. Mini Musicians, Praise Kids

6:45 p.m. Missions and Discipleship

6:00 p.m. Fellowship Time, youth

6:30 p.m. Youth Wednesday

6:30 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal