



# THE JOURNAL

Stories from the missions and ministry of First Baptist Church Amarillo

## Introducing “The Loft”

Building for the Next  
Generation

## Not Just Sundays and Wednesdays

Ministry to Students  
Throughout the Week

## Connected

Building Bridges for  
Service and Mission

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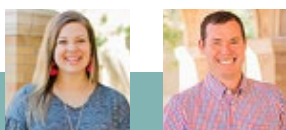
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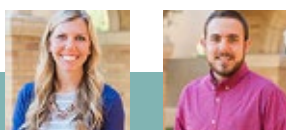
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# Introducing “The Loft”

**Dr. Howard K. Batson**

Beautiful sacred spaces of old have never been created by the efforts of a single generation. In fact, no architect of antiquity ever lived long enough to see his cathedral completed. Successive generations of masons passed down their passion for creating a sacred space in which to worship their God, the One worthy of their best. Some ancient churches

have taken more than 500 years to build. A Gothic-style church in Ulm, Germany, for example, was begun in 1377 and not completed until 513 years later in 1890.

What captures me most is that these cathedral builders thought beyond themselves. Each generation laid the foundation for future generations to worship, learn, and know God better.

Like these makers of ancient cathedrals, through 130 years of building, the members of First Baptist Church of Amarillo have created a sacred space – a place to know God, to be with God’s people, and to form moral compasses within our children

that will guide them to God’s way.

The first building constructed by First Baptist Church of Amarillo is still part of our campus, a 36x60 feet rectangular structure with a high ceiling and double doors – our Original Building. This first structure built by our forebears in the faith in 1890 remains an integral part of our campus, especially for funerals and weddings.

Like fifth generation cathedral builders, we honor our forebears by protecting and enhancing their gift to us. Even in those days of dirt streets, they built a beautiful edifice that stands as



a landmark more than a century later.

We are also grateful for the generation which built our beautiful sanctuary. They had a vision beyond themselves. Like European cathedral builders, they thought about giving God their best and not about the easiest, quickest, or least expensive way to construct God's house. They left us a legacy, giving sacrificially for years after the construction.

Of course, ultimately, we do not build sacred spaces to say to the community, "Come and see." We build our church to equip our saints to "go and do."

The forebears of our faith at First Baptist Church of Amarillo never envisioned building a structure as an architectural marvel alone. They built a base for missions. In fact, even as Dr. Yates (pastor 1924-1936) dedicated our

beautiful sanctuary to the glory of God, he said,

*"This church was erected as a missionary church. God grant that it may never disgrace its name. It must speak to our children of our missionary zeal."*

With the construction of our proposed student ministry facility, "The Loft," we leave our children with a passion for the story of Jesus and a center for missions. Together, we declare that the Creator has redeemed His creation through the death of His Son and the glorious resurrection. We are all called to share the story with the next generation. The proposed project described in this special edition of *The Journal* equips FBC to reach students for Christ like never before. Giving our best, we are calling the next generation to Christ, discipleship, missions, and ministry.

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**We are calling the next generation to Christ, discipleship, missions, and ministry.**

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*1930s construction at First Baptist's present campus*

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First Baptist Church  
Amarillo Texas





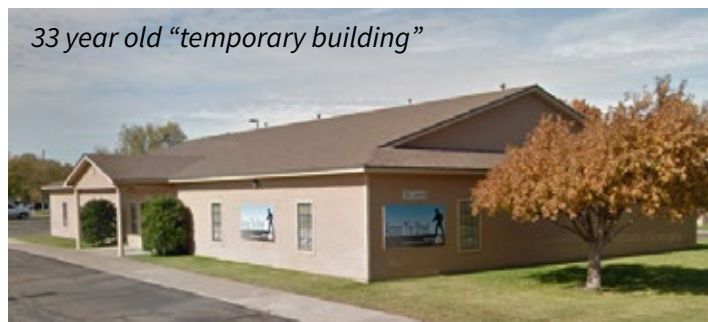
# Building for the Future

## Howard Batson & Trevor Brown

First Baptist Church of Amarillo needs more space! In fact, we have not constructed new educational space since 1973 (48 years ago). Therefore, over the last five decades, we have tried many measures to manage our growing space needs within our existing facilities.

For example, we have utilized a “temporary building” for 33 years that was actually intended for three years of use until a permanent building could be constructed. Unfortunately, the permanent replacement never came.

We have also adapted other facilities (such as the



*33 year old “temporary building”*

Family Life Center) for Bible study space on Sunday mornings, as we have nowhere else available to hold classes. For example, the Grande Room parlor and the upstairs recreational rooms have been adapted for Bible study. Members may have to maneuver around exercise bikes to get to Sunday School classes, but we have improvised.

Presently, we have zero space available to start new Sunday School classes. Zero. Recently, our Discover First (new members) class had to be housed in a very “out of the way” children’s classroom tucked away on the third floor. Our new and prospective church members had to meander through a maze of hallways and “follow the yellow brick road” of signs just to locate their inconveniently placed class.

Finally, our Student Ministry lacks adequate space for large student ministry events, like PrimeTime worship on Wednesdays or Disciple Now.

We must be willing to face the facts concerning our need for new facilities. Utilizing the Family Life Center



or trying to get another ten years out of a temporary wooden structure are inadequate solutions to a permanent problem. In the coming days, therefore, our congregation will hear a joint recommendation from both the Properties Committee and Finance Committee proposing that we construct “The Loft,” a 70,000 square foot educational facility that will house all of our Student Ministry activities, provide state-of-the-art educational space for weekday use by a myriad of ministries at FBC (all ages), and provide a much-needed connection to Baptist Community Services’ Park Central campus. With this convenient connection, our senior adults at Park Central will have safe and climate-controlled passage to church via an enclosed sky bridge.

With the construction of “The Loft” and a total relocation of our Student Ministry, we will also free up 20,000 square feet of prime educational space located on the fourth floor of our main building complex. As a result, students win, senior adults win, and young adult departments can continue to grow.

Additionally, as a part of this important project, “The Loft” will house a two-level parking garage that will be shared with Park Place Tower employees and guests during the week and provide our very best parking (most of it covered) for Sunday activities. No parking spaces will be lost.







# THE LOFT

*This new building (The Loft) will be located on the south side of our west parking lot between Harrison and Van Buren Streets, connecting to both First Baptist Church on the east, via a sky bridge, and Park Place Towers on the south at ground level.*









# Not Just Sundays and Wednesdays

**Anna Goetz & Bradley Maybin**

Picture this. You drive down Harrison Street and see a yard full of students and adults. You smell grilled burgers and hot dogs. You hear laughter and music. You see students playing football on the turf, playing basketball on the sports courts, and hanging out around the picnic tables. There's life, joy, fun, and community. But it's not a Sunday morning or a Wednesday night. It's a Tuesday evening.

What would it look like to have that much activity on the west part of our campus on a Tuesday evening? A time engaging students outside of our normal Wednesdays and Sundays? This is our vision for The Loft: a place where students can gather together throughout the week, inviting friends to a safe place to experience the love of God. At The Loft, students will hang out with friends, being tutored in physics or simply finding encouragement in community.

Our students were recently challenged to see the Student Ministry as theirs, to own the ministry they participate in each week. The Loft would provide all kinds of opportunities for students to take ownership of their youth ministry. Students







could invite their school groups to meet here, bringing their study groups or their group project meetings to this space. This would be a place students are proud of, leading them to invite their friends to The Loft throughout the week. And this ministry would welcome all students—not just FBC families.

What if a 3-on-3 basketball tournament was provided where students invite their friends who are not church members or friends who do not follow Christ?

What if a “5th Quarter” event for students encouraged them to invite friends on a Friday night following a high school football game? The Loft would provide a safe place for students to hang out after the game. Not only this, but it would also provide an opportunity for students to bring their friends with them, friends who might not otherwise ever enter a church building.

On Wednesday nights, the proximity of the sports courts to the worship area in The Loft will

help us immensely. Before and after Wednesday night worship times, students may hang out on the sports courts, meet new friends, or catch up on homework. With all student activities taking place in the same building on a Wednesday evening, there is a better opportunity to reach out to students and invite them to join us for worship.

With a kitchen fully equipped for events, there will be opportunities to host Bible Study and breakfast meetings. The Senior Girls’ Bible



Study could meet at The Loft, and the girls could grab a hot, fresh breakfast from the kitchen on their way out as they go to school. To have a fully equipped kitchen in The Loft gives us the ability to host events unlike any before.

Recently, our College Ministry hosted Study Nights in the FLC Grande Room for students to prepare for midterms and finals. Weekly events like this are imagined in The Loft, a space for students to study with one another, not just during finals, but throughout the year.

The Loft has the potential not only to host our own events, but to provide a space for events such as high school football banquets, choir concerts, or a place for college Baptist Student Ministries to gather. Being in a central location in Amarillo provides opportunities for our community to gather with one another in a safe and sacred space.

What if a student came to his football banquet at The Loft and, a few months later experienced something tragic in his life? What if in that moment he remembers the church that welcomed his team for their banquet and wonders if that same church would be willing to walk alongside of him in his



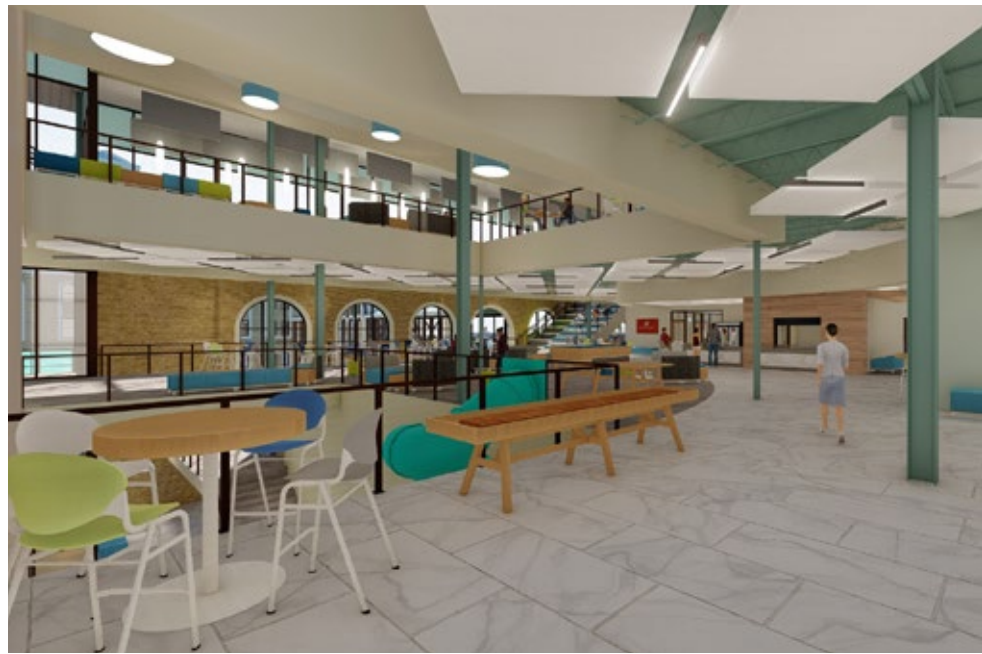


tragedy? Being in The Loft on a Thursday night for a school banquet has now become a pathway to faith.

“In college, I worked at a church that opened a new facility similar to this one,” shared Anna Goetz, Associate Minister to Students. “I saw the many benefits of having a space where students could gather throughout the week. The excitement surrounding the building enhanced not only the student ministry, but the church as a whole. The successes of that facility have better equipped me to know how The Loft could effectively reach the community for Christ.”

The Loft is designed to become part of a new rhythm in students’ lives. The hope is The Loft would instill the idea that worship and discipleship happen throughout the week. Following Jesus and living for Him are not just for Sundays and Wednesdays, but truly a lifestyle. Students are going to gather somewhere; why not provide a safe place for faith formation at First Baptist!

As First Baptist Amarillo has seen over the years, students love being together. The Loft opens up a myriad of opportunities for us to welcome students and their friends throughout the week.













# Meeting in the Middle

## **Sarah Stevens & Cliff Cary**

The addition of The Loft would be a blessing to the many ministries of FBC Amarillo, including the Children's Ministry. The added space of The Loft would provide the opportunity to expand VBS classrooms, to offer outdoor preteen hangouts on the turf, and to provide inviting rooms for parent meetings. However, more than additional rooms and facilities, The Loft would provide a unique middle ground for senior adults and children to connect and learn from one another.

FBC Amarillo has a long-standing tradition of both a faithful Senior Adult Ministry and a vibrant Children's Ministry. Two groups on opposite spectrums, both

active and important in the life of our church, both serving the FBC family in different, yet meaningful, ways.

Through The Loft, senior adults would have more direct access to the children and students of FBC to pass down "the pattern of sound teaching," showing them how to stand firm in the truth of God's Word. Senior adults would have the opportunity to delight in the innocence of childhood as they see a younger generation serving their church family and growing in their relationship with the Lord. They would be able to share old family photos and laugh at past fashion styles that are now, inevitably, trendy once again. As they stroll from Park Place or enter FBC through The Loft parking garage, senior adults would







be able to see kids playing games on the lawn or on the basketball courts that much resemble games they played growing up.

Children would have the space to sit and listen to an older generation share life and faith lessons as they play board games together or work side-by-side completing hands-on mission projects. Children would have the opportunity to learn how the Holy Spirit has guided their senior adult friends, protecting them in ways they didn't even know to ask. They would be able to share their favorite silly Knock-Knock jokes and demonstrate the latest 'flossing' dance craze. They would experience grandparent-like love and support as they spend time getting to know new, older friends.

The importance of inter-generational worship and community cannot be overstated. FBC places great value on the corporate worship experience from preschoolers to senior adults. The Loft would only serve to further FBC's intention of joining these groups and generations.

*"What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us."*

**2 Timothy 1:13-14**









# Connected

## Gay Mills & Corky Holland

The need for ministry to senior adults grows more and more each day as the American population ages. From longer life spans to a growing number of individuals entering the “second chapter” of life, opportunities abound to provide new and meaningful ways to minister to this significant population. These opportunities include fellowship with other believers, spiritual growth through Bible studies and Christian speakers, education and wellness activities, and engaging adults in meaningful missions and ministries that offer care and concern to others.

First Baptist Church of Amarillo seeks to offer ministries that encourage and empower senior adults through evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, enrichment and adventure. Even in recent days, the senior adult ministry has rebranded to encapsulate the idea of embracing the passion and purpose of those who have gone before us, passing down a rich tradition and lasting legacy. At the same time, First Baptist continues to cultivate new opportunities for growth through Bible study, relationships, physical activity, missions, and fun.

For the Family at First, the word for senior adult ministry is “Heritage,” and within the new logo for this ministry, there is an “H” complete with a pillar and capstone that is often seen throughout the architecture of the beautiful sanctuary. The pillar and capstone



**HERITAGE**  
SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY





not only offer a symbol of the “pillars” the senior adults are to First Baptist Church, but they also serve as the crossbar or connector for the first letter in the word Heritage. And just as the connector is vital in forming the letter “H,” connection is paramount for the Heritage Senior Adult Ministry of First Baptist Church.

With the addition of The Loft, there will be a tangible expression of connection as the new “sky bridge” walkway will link the Park Central Retirement Community directly to First Baptist. This bridge will, indeed, be a “game-changer” when it comes to providing a way for the many residents of Park Central to participate in both worship and the numerous activities offered through the Heritage Senior Adult Ministry. This bridge will not only pass over the constant traffic on Harrison Street, but also provide protection from all types of Panhandle weather. Upon completion of this walkway, Park Central residents living in Park Place Towers, Moore Assisted Living, the Harrington, and the Continental will be able to walk from their facilities all the way to the sanctuary of First Baptist Church without ever stepping outdoors, avoiding both inclement weather and potentially hazardous traffic. Indeed, this will be a bridge to connect the church with the many residents of the Park Central Community.



Even greater, beyond a physical bridge, The Loft will help the Senior Adult Ministry build many other types of connections as well. This includes bridging relationships as The Loft provides multiple areas to fellowship with one another, enjoying the view by a window, gathering around a table, and sharing a hot pot of coffee together. Even a walk to worship, Bible study, or First Singers can be an opportunity for connection with both old and new friends alike.

The Loft will also build bridges for Bible study and other educational opportunities with meeting rooms that can accommodate all types of groups. From women’s Bible studies to balance classes, the potential for making connections through educational activities will be abundant. Furthermore, with both inviting indoor and outdoor features, The Loft will now provide new options for Heritage Fellowships that have not been possible. Before The Loft, activities that happened just a street away or after dark limited attendance for many Park Central senior adults. Now, these activities will be far more accessible to all residents who want to participate. In addition, The Loft will build bridges for service to the community, being a great place to organize visits to homebound members, assemble care packages for friends in need, or train one another to take the word of Christ out to the community.





Yet, the bridges built by the Heritage Senior Adult Ministry utilizing The Loft will not only be limited to senior adults, but will also be bridges that make connections with all generations of the Family at First. For example, picture senior adults and high school students working side-by-side to fill Christmas care packages for the population at local prisons. And through these connections, the potential to lead someone to Christ or disciple one another in His abundant love is remarkable! There are limitless possibilities for God to provide through the addition of The Loft, and this is a great time for you to join us!



# Questions Answered

## Why now?

We started envisioning this venue for ministry and missions about a dozen years ago, but first needed to complete our exterior infrastructure update (Master Plan) in order to make First Baptist Church accessible to all members and visitors by coming into compliance with the American Disabilities Act. Moving past Master Plan, we began touring other student ministry facilities two years ago in Amarillo, Dallas, and Nashville, gleaning the best ideas for reaching the next generation for Christ.

The financial markets (interest rates) are also very favorable at this time, and Baptist Community Services is presently willing to come alongside First Baptist Church and partner in the project since their residents gain easy access to First Baptist and their employees and guests will have secure, covered parking during the week. With the construction of The Loft, First Baptist Church will be able to meet the needs of future generations for decades to come.

## What is the construction budget, and how are we going to pay for the new facility?

Construction drawings are presently being developed by the architects and engineers. Therefore, we have not obtained a guaranteed maximum price from a construction manager. This is a four story, first class facility (matching the façade of our other educational structures) which includes a parking garage containing 146 parking spaces on the first two floors. While there are not yet any firm bids, we expect the construction budget to range between \$24 and \$28 million. This is a significant price tag, but the members of First Baptist Church of Amarillo have a history of stepping up to big challenges. Those who have gone before us sacrificed to provide First Baptist Church with the most inspiring sanctuary that could be constructed. They cut no corners, giving God their best, even during the Great Depression. Through the years, each successive generation has built upon our foundation for the needs of future generations of First Baptist Church worshipers. Complementary educational space was added in 1954 and 1973. The Family Life Center was constructed in 1980, and Master Plan created a beautified, cohesive, and accessible campus in 2010. We need, once again, to rise up and give God our very best as we shape the future of our children's faith.

Fortunately, we have either already collected or received commitments for \$15.8 million. Once our members are given the opportunity, we feel certain that many of you will want to partner with us by making a contribution above and beyond your regular budget gifts to First Baptist Church. Additionally, we have already arranged a line of credit at below-market interest rates to spread any unfunded portions of construction costs over future years. Given the recent generosity of our members, we think it is realistic to project that the project will be completely debt free within ten years. Finally, new families will be drawn to FBC by the new ministry opportunities found in "The Loft" and will contribute, as we faithfully minister to their students.



## How will this new ministry tool be used?

In this special edition of *The Journal*, you will find ministry activities and approaches that will be utilized in The Loft by everyone, from preschoolers to senior adults. For a short list, we see The Loft being used for Vacation Bible School, Mothers on Mission (MOMs), ladies' Bible studies, men's groups, Young Adult Live, College Ministry activities, Sunday School cookouts, connecting kids with Park Central residents for missions and ministry, and as an after-school hangout for youth, including academic tutoring, recreation, and just connecting with friends.

## What architectural style will be used?

In forming the façade of this new facility, the architects knew they must reflect our present architectural beauty. Having previously and appropriately appointed our campus with Master Plan arches, arcades, stained glass, and rotunda, our architects knew fully well the rich history of architectural beauty on the First Baptist Church campus. The new facility is a beautiful blend of arches, cast stone, and green tile roofs that echoes the rich architectural style that is captured in both our sanctuary and Master Plan. At the same time, however, the new facility takes advantage of new construction methods and materials to create a beautiful blend of both traditional architectural appointments with up-to-date architectural trends to produce a building that will relate to all generations.

## How can I contribute?

You can already give online at [www.firstamarillo.org](http://www.firstamarillo.org) by using the "Giving" tab and selecting the "New Project" designation for your gift. Also, you may simply designate your envelope and check as "New Project" and place it in one of our offering boxes. For your convenience, special envelopes will be distributed in the future. Please remember, however, as much as we would like for you to participate in this exciting project, all gifts should be above and beyond your regular gifts to the church budget. We certainly understand that not everyone can participate at this time.

## How can I learn more?

You're invited to the following events concerning The Loft:

**Information Forum**  
**Sunday, August 29th | 7:00pm**

*Following our Evening Worship*

**Church-Wide Vote**  
**Sunday, September 19th | 6:00pm**

*During our Evening Worship*

Have more questions? A Q&A time will be a part of our August 29th forum. We also invite you to email [questions@firstamarillo.org](mailto:questions@firstamarillo.org) (allow several days for a response) or call one of our staff members at (806) 373-2891.

First Baptist Church Amarillo  
1208 S. Tyler St.  
Amarillo, TX 79101

# THE JOURNAL

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;  
Make known among the nations what he has done.  
Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.  
*Psalm 105:1-2*



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
*Amarillo*

[www.firstamarillo.org](http://www.firstamarillo.org)