



THE JOURNAL

Stories from the missions and ministry of First Baptist Church Amarillo

Phoenix

Students share Christ's love through Spring Break mission trips

Dominican Republic

First Baptist Church giving provides life-changing medication

Fostering Hope

Volunteers continue to meet foster family needs quickly and in many different ways

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Love Local

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HUNGARY JUNE 19 - 30

SANTA CRUZ JUNE 21 - 24

SOUTH AFRICA JUNE 28 - JULY 8

LEBANON JULY 19 - 27

GUATEMALA JULY 26 - AUGUST 3

www.firstamarillo.org/2019-mission-trips





Introducing The Journal

In 1896, with a membership of around 105, the First Baptist Church of Amarillo pledged \$320 to foreign missions. Again and again in the century following, this congregation has reaffirmed the commitment that the love of Jesus Christ compels us outward into our city, our region, and our world.

The powerful stories of God's work through the missions and ministry of FBC Amarillo could fill volumes. In hopes of empowering our worship and witness today, a few of our most recent stories are captured here. This occasional journal is an attempt to share glimpses of God's continuing work through the lives of faithful

people in our midst. From here in Amarillo to places across the globe, these experiences are individual testimonies made possible by the continued support and commitment of an entire church family.

These stories also serve to point us forward, to lead us onward in our calling and commitment to embody God's redeeming love in all places and to all people. As we give thanks for what God has done, let these stories also inspire us to imagine new ways of living out a faithful Christian witness today.



Trevor Brown
Associate Pastor

The “Awe Moment” Showing God’s Love in Phoenix

JON MARK BEILUE

The first day of the high school spring break mission trip didn’t go quite like Erin Wood hoped. It was 2017 and Erin, then a sophomore at Amarillo High, was helping teach kindergartners at a Vacation Bible School class at a Bible Church in Phoenix.

“Not a lot of kids showed up and I felt discouraged a little bit,” she said. “It was not what I expected. I didn’t bond with anyone.”

And then, on the second day, came the bubbles. Big soapy bubbles blowing in the air. From that began a rudimentary, but loving, relationship with Erin and a Muslim family as they sought to understand God’s love.

Erin was with a younger group, but Nadia*, 8, a young Muslim girl, saw the bubbles and was mesmerized by them. She didn’t want to leave, and didn’t want to leave Erin. As Nicole, a ministry partner in Phoenix, got ready to take Nadia and her siblings home that day, Nadia asked if Erin would come along.

So, of course, she did, helping walk them a short distance to their home. Erin and others saw the small house, learning that a 10-year-old brother was basically the head of the house until both parents got home that evening.

On their final day there, as they walked together, Nadia began to probe Erin with questions: Why are you here?

Why are you here? Why are you my friend? She used that as a chance to explain Jesus’ love.



Why are you my friend? Erin used that as a chance to explain Jesus' love.

"She said I love you and my mom and dad," Erin said, "and I told her that I loved her too, but imagine how much God loves you that He would send His son to die for you. Her eyes were wide open. It was the first time she heard about Jesus.

"We take so much for granted that people know about God and God's son, but this was really an 'awe moment' for her."

The mother, who was pregnant with her eighth child, was there when they walked them home. She invited Erin and a couple of friends in where they painted

temporary tattoos on the children. That night was a VBS fun night, and the Muslim family returned.

"That night, it was as if time completely paused for me," Erin said, "and I felt the Holy Spirit overflowing the place. I remember crying, like tears of joy in saying goodbye, which was really hard. Nadia was crying; her siblings were crying. We didn't know if we'd ever see each other again."

They did exchange a few letters, with Nadia at one time writing, "God loves us all."

"I thought, 'Wow, how crazy that

Erin Wood (left) returned for First Student's third mission trip to Phoenix this March.





“I got her aside and asked her what was wrong.”

“She said that nobody loves her...”

she would write that,” Erin said.

Fast forward a year, to March 2018, and again the high school mission trip to Phoenix. One of the advantages of a mission trip to the same place is to rekindle relationships. But Nadia’s family had moved several miles away after they were evicted.

Nicole, however, had a car sent to pick up Nadia and her siblings. Nadia and younger sister, Fatima, 6, both hugged Erin tightly. But if Nadia and Erin bonded in 2017, this time, God seemed to lead Erin to Fatima.

She was a bit of a troubled child, starting some squabbles, not listening, not always obeying. She really wasn’t interested in hearing about God. Toward the end of the week, Fatima seemed more upset than usual; she was crying.

“I took her aside and asked her what was wrong,” Erin said. “She said that nobody loves her, that she had so many brothers and sisters that her mom and dad didn’t have time to love them all, that I was so loving and happy and she wanted to be happy like me.”

These may be divine appointments, one-on-one moments when children, Muslim children, in this instance, can begin to see what one person's words can paint.

"You just have to break it down the best that you can," Erin said, "that her parents do love her, but there is a God that loves you a million times more than that."

Erin began to list to Fatima all those who loved her, but maybe didn't tell her all the time, and

they "cried it out." In front of their home, their grateful mother came out. All had a group hug one final time.

"Thank you for loving my children," she said.

Erin is now a senior at Amarillo High, and this March 2019 was her final mission trip to Phoenix. As she had hoped, Erin was again able to build on what God had begun several years before. Erin's commitment to serve and God's faithful provision had left them all

changed.

"All of this has made me realize God is in control," Erin said. "What He wants is what's going to happen. I have learned so much about the power and presence of God. The past three years, the last nights of VBS, His presence has been overwhelming. It's like a movie, and it completely stopped, and I saw God's power and hand at work."

**Names in this article have been changed to protect children.*

Building Bridges

Sharing God's Love

ended with the one who loved her the most, who sent his son Jesus to die for her.

"I don't think she believed it at first, that anyone would do that," Erin said. "But like with Nadia, it was the same with Fatima. Her eyes widened, like a breakthrough. She was so much happier the rest of the day, and it had such an impact on me."

Final days are not always easy days because week-long friendships and nurturing abruptly end. On the drive to their home, Erin, Nadia and Fatima



Phoenix is the 5th largest city in the United States

The Phoenix metro area included an estimated 4.7 million people in the 2017 census.




 **MISSIONS**
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AMARILLO

2019 trip locations denoted by gold line

FBC Partnership Missions

In 2017, First Baptist took steps to increase direct partnerships in its missions efforts. In addition to its continued support of cooperative giving, FBC has endeavored to increase reciprocity in missions, maintain hands-on connections with partners, and work directly with church plants and global ministries in ongoing kingdom work. The **Partnership Missions Fund**, under the stewardship of our missions committees and staff, allows our church to fund strategic mission priorities as they work toward financial independence and sustainability. Your gifts toward Partnership Missions through our annual offerings directly support ministries like those shown here, funded in 2018.



KidsAlive: Lebanon
Beirut, Lebanon

Uganda Baptist Seminary
Jinja, Uganda

Mokopane, South Africa

Medical Teams Continue Meeting Needs

JON MARK BEILUE

Dr. Richard Bechtol and First Baptist Church's mission team of 23 saw a steady stream of patients file into their makeshift clinic over four days in late July and early August in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Elderly men and infants, mothers and their children. The team treated 900 patients in four days with illnesses from diabetes to cardiac problems, stomach pains to high fevers.

"It's not 8 to 5," said Bechtol, a retired Amarillo physician. "It's more like 8 (a.m.) to 8 (p.m.). It's 12-hour days sometimes. Even though you don't want to do that, that's what it takes sometimes to see all of those who need medical help."

Though Bechtol, along with wife Susan, said the goal is to take care of patients and show Christian love in this Dominican Republic medical mission trip, treating that many can sometimes seem like an unavoidable blur.



But then a special situation and special patient will arrive and crystallize why the Bechtols are there and why FBC is involved with Buckner International – to make a difference, to be that example of Christ’s love to those who need it.

A young mother with three children came to the clinic. The oldest was 12, and it was obvious the mother treated her a little differently than the others.

“There were a lot of dynamics going on with that family,” Bechtol said. “The mother was isolating

her, and I didn’t know if she was just trying to protect her.”

Patients were given toothbrushes. The younger children picked their own. The mother picked the one for the 12-year-old. It could only be a guess as to why, but the girl suffered from seizures. She had as many as six a day.

Chelsea Stevens, a nurse practitioner, saw the young girl. Stevens was also able to learn this – the family was out of seizure medication.

Bechtol supervises the nurse practitioners. “If there are problems, they come to me, and we talk about formulating a treatment plan,” Bechtol said. “Chelsea said this little girl is having six seizures a day. They are out of medication. We don’t have that medication. What are we going to do?”

Indeed, the medical mission team brought an ample supply of medicine and supplies with them, but anti-seizure medicine, no, that’s not on the list.





That's when Bechtol summoned Cliff Cary, FBC's minister to children, and Jeremy Copeland, a Buckner representative in the Dominican Republic. They huddled together with a Buckner official who oversees the medical portion of their organization.

Cary quizzed them about the family, their financial situation, and the short-term outlook. In short, Cary said we can help them – we being First Baptist Church.

"I told them, if they want, we can provide them the medication," Cary said.

It would be easy, perhaps understandable, to shake heads and say there's not much we can do at this time. After all, this is a medical mission trip, not a full hospital. The easy thing would be to hand off the little girl's dire situation to someone else.

There is a portion of FBC's

budget for moments like these, money that comes in the form of scholarships and gifts from church members to provide help in what unknown ways may arise.

Cary did the math in his head – he knew how much had been spent, how much budget money was available, and how much the medication cost. He was empowered to make a decision when it most needed to be made – right then.

Four years of anti-seizure medication was purchased, with Buckner to manage the distribution and care. Not down the road, not in a few days, but at that very moment. It was life-changing, if not life-saving.

“To me, this is just one example of doctors and nurses coming together, Buckner coming together, and First Baptist Church coming together through the power of the Lord to minister to this little girl,” Bechtol said. “I’d like to think it’s the kind of care that Christ would give.”

Cary, like the Bechtols, has been on a number of mission trips. The tendency is often to focus on those whose problems couldn’t be solved, where help just wasn’t sufficient at the expense of those whose dire needs were met.

“But for this little girl and her family, this was truly life-changing,” he said. “It’s such a thing to have a conversation and look over someone’s shoulder into a momma’s eyes who just wants the best for her child.”

“I don’t believe she showed up at the doorway hoping that some church would pay for four years of medication. She was just at the end of her rope as far as what to do for her child. Through a divine appointment, we were able to help her.”



The Mission Goes On

For many years, First Baptist has been engaged in medical missions. FBC teams served in Kenya and, most recently, have been instrumental in creating two self-sustaining medical clinics in the Dominican Republic. Continuing these efforts and our partnership with Buckner International, a team of over 30 people will travel to Guatemala in July of 2019. The team will see patients, distribute medications, establish plans for ongoing treatment, and connect with the spiritual needs of many families.

Fostering Hope

“Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” – Matthew 18: 4-5





JON MARK BEILUE

A little more than three years ago, a lunch was scheduled after the 11 a.m. worship service at First Baptist Church. The purpose? It was for those who were interested in foster care and adoption.

“I told David that I don’t know why I feel like I have to go, but I’m going,” Sydney Rieff said. “I told him that he didn’t have to come with me, but he’s been there from the beginning with me.”

A seed was planted that Sunday in November 2015 for Sydney and her husband, David Rieff. There had to be something – something impactful – they could do in the critical area of foster families.

“At first I seemed like I was out of my element,” Sydney said, “because we didn’t think we could be foster parents or adopt. But that is so untrue. There are things you can do.”

On Memorial Day weekend 2016, a half-year later, Fostering Hope began. It is a ministry that Sydney started that supports and helps foster families.

Think of this analogy: if foster families are an athletic team, then Fostering Hope is the booster club. It seeks to meet needs, provide tangible support and let foster parents know they have an advocate.

“Nobody does exactly what we do,” Sydney said. “We can pretty much fill any basic need when a new foster child comes into a home.”

Fostering Hope partners with as many as a dozen foster/adoption agencies in the Amarillo/Canyon area. When agencies place children in a foster home, Fostering Hope comes aboard to address any daily needs.



“They are so good about responding quickly,” said Tanya Park, executive director for A World For Children, an agency which has 55 foster children in 50 families in the region that is from south of Lubbock to the top of the Texas Panhandle.

“They are a huge blessing for families because it can be so chaotic when a child comes into a home.”

One of the first needs Fostering Hope meets is providing clothes from an amply donated clothing closet. That alone makes a difference, but far from the only help.

Bedding is available, as are diapers, toys and books, all of them donated by those in the community. Furniture is provided. David has become skilled in setting up bunk beds for those families who suddenly can use them.

This past year meals were provided during those hectic early times. “If there is a new foster placement, some have special needs or need to go to the doctor that very day, so foster parents spend a lot of time running around from here to there, and having a meal waiting for them is a huge deal,” Sydney said.

Being able to respond to needs quickly is the key. The relay of a foster child from Child Protective Services to a fostering agency to foster parents often happens suddenly.

“So foster parents have no idea when they may get a call, and sometimes they are taking care of kids they were not quite prepared for,” Park said. “If a foster parent wants a 6-year-old, but they have an 18-month-old sibling, the foster parent might take both and not be ready for the 18-month-old. We just call Fostering Hope, and they will have the necessary supplies.”

Christmas 2018 was the second year for Fostering Hope to partner with Buckner for a Christmas party for those ages 18 to 25 who weren’t adopted. Many went from foster home to foster home and are now on their own.

Gifts often come from First Baptist Church’s Angel Tree. Fostering Hope provides the meal, and the Christmas story is read.

“Seeing them unwrap gifts is huge for me,” Sydney said. “For many of them, this is the only Christmas they will have.”

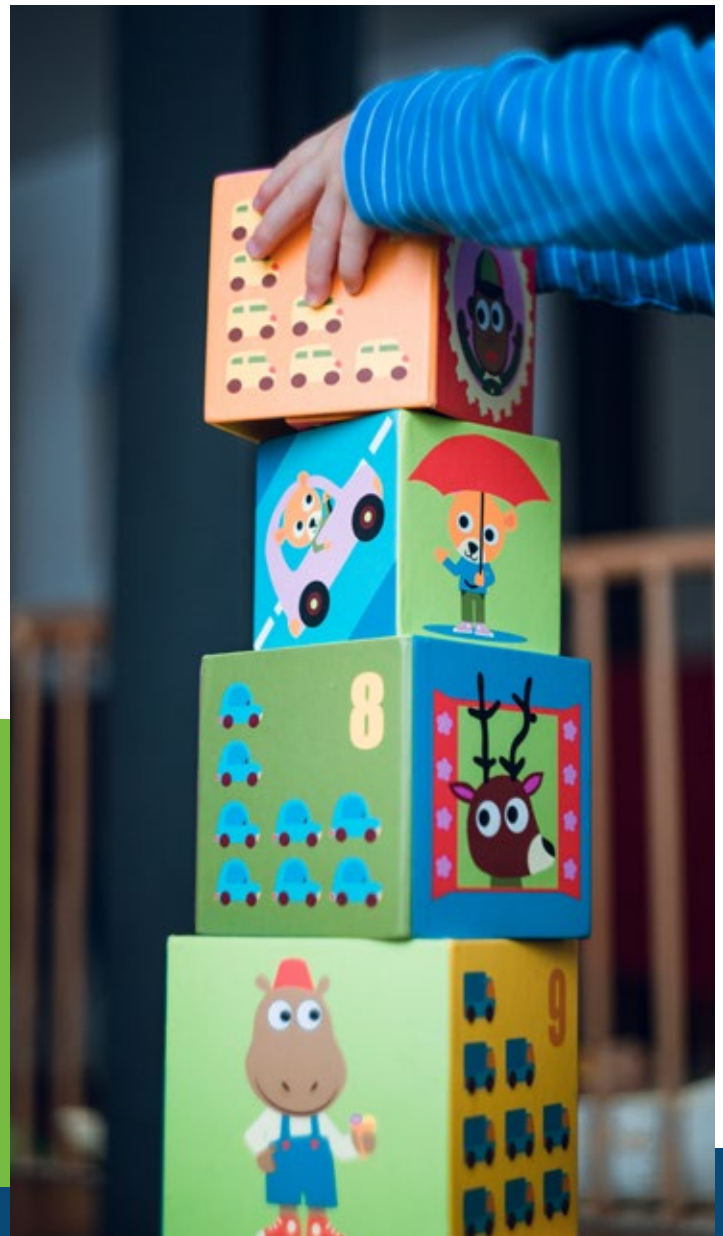
Then there's the box ministry for those who have aged out of the foster program and are taking advantage of college tuition provided by the state. Alternating with Coulter Road Baptist Church and FBC each month, Fostering Hope crams a 10-by-6 box with the things a college student needs – quarters for laundry, tea bags, pens and highlighters, Ramen noodles, stick-it notes and on and on.

“It goes to show how much we do,” Sydney said. While Fostering Hope had its beginnings at FBC, and a majority of the approximately 80 volunteers are from the church, Rieff emphasized that Fostering Hope welcomes community-wide participation.

For the Rieffs, and for others who volunteer time and donate supplies to Fostering Hope, the ministry has deep meaning because of what is at stake.

“No one wants to hear the dirty details of what goes on out there,” Sydney said. “Even in a broad brush, there's so much neglect, so much drug abuse, so much hunger and everything that goes along with that.

“We'd be horrified if we knew what went on next door. There are so many needs out there, and my heart is broken daily. These children have not been loved, much less taught about Jesus. We can't immediately meet all their needs, but there are things that we can do to show Jesus' love.”



If you're interested in volunteering with Fostering Hope or learning how to be involved, email fosteringhopeamarillo@gmail.com

Love Local

Want to serve, but not sure where to begin? Want to be a part of local missions, but you don't know how? The best way to begin is to start today! First Baptist has a plethora of ministries that need volunteers. Contact us today, and we can connect with ministry leaders serving Christ right here in Amarillo!

In addition to the various ways that church members serve in our discipleship and education ministries for all ages, there are a host of ministries that engage in local missions.



Perkins Community Center

This food & clothing ministry serves every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 9:00-10:30am. Additional morning volunteers are needed to help serve, interview clients, sort clothing, or stock supplies.

Christian Men & Women's Job Corp

This ministry helps those in our community without a job receive skills training, mentoring, relapse prevention, and connects them with great employment opportunities. Volunteers, teachers, and mentors are always needed.

English as a Second Language

FBC volunteers provide an ESL program on Thursday mornings and Sunday afternoons to internationals, newcomers, and refugees in our community.

Margaret Wills School Partnership

FBC partners with Margaret Wills Elementary to support the many needs of students and teachers. Volunteers help mentor children, serve through Kids Café, and bring gifts to teachers.

Prison Visitation and Ministry

Volunteers regularly visit inmates and conduct ministry programs on-campus at our local prison facilities.

Snack Pak 4Kids

This ministry feeds school children over the weekend. Our volunteers pick up food, sort it, package it, and deliver it to the schools.

Disaster Relief Ministry

First Baptist has a mobile shower and laundry unit that provides a key component of disaster relief ministry. Men and women can serve through relief and mission trip support.

Fostering Hope

Fostering Hope is a ministry helping children, families, and agencies in the Amarillo area who are involved in foster care and/or adoption.

WMU

The Women's Missionary Union is an organization that strives to challenge the church to understand and be involved in the mission of God. Mission Friends® for Preschoolers 3 years old through kindergarten, Girls in Action® for Girls Grades 1-6, Acteens® for Girls Ages 12-17 or in Grades 7-12, and Women on Mission® for Women 18 and up are all apart of the WMU.

To connect with these or other missions opportunities, call our church office or email trevor@firstamarillo.org

SAVE THE DATE:

4 AMARILLO MISSION WEEK June 24-27

Join four downtown churches serving in a week of ministry together throughout Amarillo.

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