

Make it Your  
**CHURCH**



HOUSTON'S FIRST  
BAPTIST CHURCH

*welcome.*

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Dear friends,

One of the great transitions in life is becoming a member of a local church. You may be considering church membership at Houston's First because you're a new believer in Jesus Christ, you've recently moved to our community, or you're simply looking for a new home to grow in your faith. No matter what brought you to this point or where you are in your faith, we want to help you as you make this important decision!

The following pages provide a summary of our mission and vision, our theology and beliefs, our membership process, and more. There is so much to know about Houston's First, we could never fit it all in one booklet. With four campuses, dozens of ministries, and countless opportunities to get connected, these pages merely provide a starting point for you to discover what Houston's First has to offer and all that God is doing through our church.

If you are sensing God leading you to become a member of Houston's First, I encourage you to take the first step by starting the conversation. Three common ways of doing that are to speak to staff members or volunteers at the end of a worship service, visit the Connection Center at your campus, or attend a *Make It Your Church* session. You can also give your campus a call any time and let them know you want to know more about membership. The greater Houston area is blessed to have so many Bible-believing, Bible-teaching churches. It is my prayer that you would seek the Lord's will as you look for a church home. If He leads you to join Houston's First, we're ready to welcome you as you make it your church!

In Him,



Pastor Gregg Matte



# About Houston's First

Houston's First Baptist Church is a relevant biblical community where people gather their hearts, grow their souls, and give their lives as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission.

## MISSION = WHY DO WE EXIST?

### THE GREAT COMMISSION: MATTHEW 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

## VISION = WHO ARE WE?

### RELEVANT

Having the passion, desire, and ability to build necessary bridges to move people from culture to Christ.

### BIBLICAL

Fully embracing the beliefs and values revealed in the Bible as true, eternal, and life-changing.

### COMMUNITY

Providing a place to be authentic, involved, impacted, and impactful.

## STRATEGY = WHAT DO WE DO?

### GATHER OUR HEARTS

We gather our hearts for worship through music and teaching each Sunday.

### GROW OUR SOULS

We grow our souls by participating in Life Bible Studies and other discipleship-focused classes.

### GIVE OUR LIVES

We give our lives away through missions, volunteering, evangelism, prayer, and financial contributions.



# Gather Our Hearts



## THE LOOP

After more than 130 years of ministry in Downtown Houston, we moved to our location on the Katy Freeway in 1977. While we've grown and expanded since then, we've continued to minister to the city of Houston from this busy corner of I-10 and 610.

**Location:** 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024

### Sundays:

- Worship @ 9:15a, 11a & 4p (The4)
- Life Bible Studies @ 8a, 9:15a, 10:45a & 5:30p

Gregg Matte, Senior Pastor  
(PastorGregg@HoustonsFirst.org)

## HOUSTON'S FIRST EN ESPAÑOL

**Location:** 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024 (*Chapel*)

### Sundays:

- Worship @ 11a
- Life Bible Study @ 9:15a

Enrique Puig, Ministro en Español  
(Enrique.Puig@HoustonsFirst.org)

## ONLINE GATHERINGS

When you're not able to gather with Houston's First in person at one of our campuses, take advantage of these online options:

### Livestream:

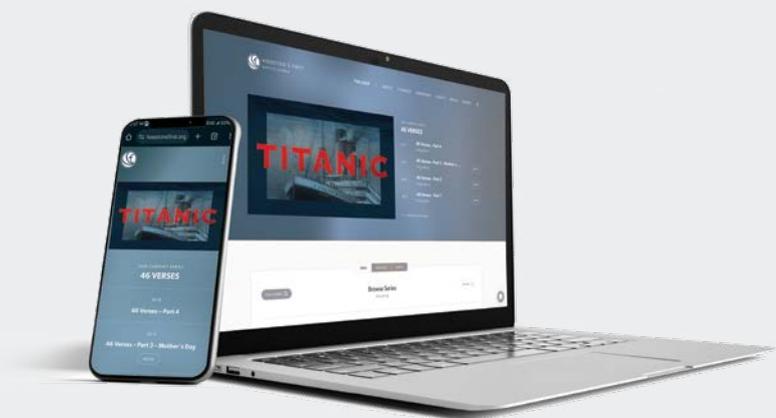
- Sundays on [HoustonsFirst.org](https://HoustonsFirst.org), YouTube, or Facebook @ 9:15a, 11a & 4p

### Podcast:

- Search for "Houston's First Baptist Church" on your favorite podcast platform

### Radio:

- Sundays on KHCB 105.7 FM @ 11a



Houston's First desires to reach all of Houston with the Good News of Jesus Christ. In order to accomplish our mission of The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20), we made the decision in 2011 to multiply the church's presence throughout the city by establishing campuses across the Houston area.



## CYPRESS

In 2013, our Cypress Campus opened in northwest Harris County.

**Location:** 11011 Mason Road, Cypress, TX 77433

### Sundays:

- Worship @ 9:30a, 11a & 4p
- Life Bible Studies @ 8a, 9:30a, 11a & 5:30p

Jason Swiggart, Cypress Campus Pastor  
(Jason.Swiggart@HoustonsFirst.org)



## DOWNTOWN

In 2011, we re-established a presence where the church first began in 1841.

**Location:** 1730 Jefferson Street, Houston, TX 77003

### Sundays:

- Worship @ 9:30a & 11a
- Life Bible Studies @ 9:30a & 11a

Leon Brooks III, Downtown Campus Pastor  
(Leon.Brooks@HoustonsFirst.org)



## SIENNA

In 2013, we launched our Sienna Campus in Fort Bend County.

**Location:** 4309 Sienna Parkway, Missouri City, TX 77459

### Sundays:

- Worship @ 9a & 10:45a
- Life Bible Studies @ 9a & 10:45a

Malcolm Marshall, Sienna Campus Pastor  
(Malcolm.Marshall@HoustonsFirst.org)

# Growing Our Souls



## LIFE BIBLE STUDY

Life Bible Studies meet weekly on Sundays and provide opportunities for going deeper in God's Word and building community. From infants to senior adults, Life Bible Studies exist for all ages and life stages. Find a Life Bible Study by texting **LBS** to **44322**.



## EQUIP

Equip classes and groups meet throughout the week (primarily on Wednesdays) and foster a deeper connection to God's Word. Classes are available for unique life stages, special situations, or particular areas of biblical study. Equip classes and groups run on a semester basis. Text **EQUIP** to **44322** for more information.



# Giving Our Lives

## MISSIONS

We strive to see the gospel advance throughout our city, nation, and world. Through mission trips in the United States and to other countries, local outreach at our Faith Centers, aiding missionaries, or supporting foster and adoption care, we are able to accomplish our mission of The Great Commission. Text **MISSIONS** to **44322** to learn how to get involved.

## GENEROSITY

There is more to generosity than financial transactions. In God's eyes, our growth in generosity is less about a financial transaction and more about a transformation. Generosity is a matter of the heart! As a form of worship, receiving tithes and offerings is a part of each of our worship services. No matter where you are on your generosity journey, we encourage you to discover the blessings that come when you give back to the Lord.

## WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT TITHING

### What is the difference between a tithe and an offering?

- A "tithe" is giving a tenth of our income.
- An "offering" is anything we give in addition to our tithe.
- A tithe in the Old Testament was required by God, while offerings were freewill.

#### Tithes

1. Regular giving to our Great Commission fund
2. Stock Gifts
3. Planned Giving (wills, estates, etc.)

#### Offerings

1. World Mission Offering
2. General Missions
3. Legacy 68:5
4. Benevolence
5. Disaster Relief Fund

## THREE WAYS TO GIVE

### 1 ONSITE

Collection boxes

### 2 ONLINE

HoustonsFirst.org

### 3 ON MOBILE

Text **GIVE** to **44322** or download the Houston's First Baptist Church app and use the GIVE feature.

## REASONS WHY I SHOULD TITHE ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD

1. Because God commands it. *Leviticus 27:30*
2. Because Jesus commanded it. *Matthew 23:23*
3. Tithing demonstrates that God has first place. *Deuteronomy 14:23*
4. Tithing reminds us that everything was given to us by God! Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the ability to produce wealth. *Deuteronomy 8:18*
5. Tithing expresses our gratitude. *Psalms 116:12*
6. God says that refusing to tithe is stealing from Him! *Malachi 3:8-10*
7. Tithing gives God a chance to prove He exists and wants to bless you! *Malachi 3:8-10*
8. Obedience in tithing is a proof that we really love God. *John 14:15*

# PATHMAKER

## VOLUNTEERING

On every campus and across our community, the ministry of Houston's First Baptist Church comes to life through our team of PATHMAKERS—the generous people who have said “Yes!” to the call to serve.

Regardless of your age, background, or schedule, there is a place for you to serve at Houston's First!

- Preschool Ministry (birth–kindergarten)
- Children's Ministry (1st–5th grade)
- Student Ministry (6th–12th grade)
- Thru the Roof Special Needs Ministry
- Adult Choir or Singers
- Welcome Team
- Faith Centers & CornerBooks
- Prayer and Connection
- Production & Photography
- Adult Ministries

Not sure where to begin when it comes to serving? We offer a free spiritual gifts assessment online! While completion of this assessment is not required to serve, it can better assist you in determining how to best use your God-given gifts. Text **SERVE** to **44322** to get started.





# Safeguarding

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## Cultivating a Culture that Cares

The code of conduct for appropriate interaction with kids

At Houston's First Baptist Church we take seriously the responsibility to create environments of safety and security, protecting the wellbeing of children, youth, and special needs adults. These policies and procedures have been developed to prevent intentional and unintentional harm happening to children, youth, and special needs adults as they participate in programs, services, and activities across all campuses and auxiliary ministries. These policies are also intended to assist our staff and volunteers as they serve the church.

**1 We will say something if we see something.**

If you observe any behavior (child, parent, volunteer, or staff) that seems "off" or suspicious, report this to your supervisor or a staff member right away.

**2 We will watch for and report "grooming" behavior.**

Anything that creates secrecy, privacy, or isolates a child from the group by an adult should be reported.

**3 We will maintain the two-adult rule.**

Two adults must be present in the room or area of ministry and one-on-one interactions should be interruptible and visible.

**4 We will ensure private activities are only performed by approved persons and do not violate the two-adult rule.**

This includes activities such as diapering, toileting, dressing, and bathing.

**5 We will teach and model healthy touch.**

We will not engage in spanking, hitting, or threatening any child, nor any behavior or touching which is inappropriate with a child including sexualized behavior such as kissing and fondling. We will respect a child's ability to say no.

**6 We will exercise due diligence in avoiding risky behavior in "hotspots."**

Hotspots include transportation, bathrooms, closets, camp lodging, or secluded areas.

**7 We will communicate with everyone in a safe, respectful, and encouraging manner.**

We will not bully, give false promises, engage in sexualized talk, "pet names," shouting, shaming, or silencing of any child, volunteer, staff member, or parent. This also includes the addition of a second adult in all electronic communication with students.

**8 We will affirm each person's inherent dignity as someone made in the image of God.**

**9 We will report any behavior by children that is not age-appropriate in an effort to provide restoration and healing.**

**10 We will provide professional communication with parents/guardians and not insult or criticize parenting techniques.**

Any practices deemed dangerous to a child will be reported to a supervisor.

**11 We will be aware of the potential for peer abuse in any form and seek to provide supervision and intercession that will minimize this risk.**

**12 Every approved Safeguarding volunteer will be early identified as a Houston's First PATHMAKER.**

# Membership

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Membership at Houston's First is open to anyone who has:

1. Placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins
2. Been baptized by immersion by a body of believers of like faith and practice
3. Is in agreement with our Statement of Faith and Bylaws.

Our complete Statement of Faith, Beliefs, and Bylaws are shared in detail at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

## WHY MEMBERSHIP?

- In joining a church, you make visible your commitment to Christ and His people; making a commitment makes a powerful statement in a low-commitment culture.
- We can be overly independent; church membership keeps us accountable.
- Joining the church will help staff members and leaders be more faithful shepherds.
- Joining the church gives you an opportunity to make public commitments.

# Membership: Becoming a Christian

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If you haven't placed your faith in Jesus, allow the following questions to guide you.

### Is there really a God?

- The Bible indicates that there is one true God and all are accountable to this truth. *Proverbs 22:2; Romans 1:20*

### Why can't I seem to find Him?

- Sin creates a barrier that keeps us from knowing God personally. *Proverbs 20:9; Romans 3:23*

### Is there any consequence for my sin?

- In man's attempt to reach God, many have chosen the wrong path that leads them to eternal death.  
*Proverbs 16:25; Romans 6:23*

### Is there any hope for me?

- God reaches down to us and offers a personal relationship through the life, death, and resurrection of His son Jesus Christ.  
*Proverbs 28:13; Romans 10:9*

### What is next?

- There's a difference between knowing about God and knowing Him personally. It is not enough to know facts about the new life we can have, we must receive the gift God has offered. *Proverbs 28:13; Romans 10:9*

### Talking with God

- If you believe all these things and would like to find mercy in Jesus Christ, then you can sincerely say this prayer and accept Him into your heart: "Lord God, I know You are the Creator of all things. I realize I am unclean because of my sin. I understand my sin leads to death. Forgive me of my sin. I want the life that Jesus brings. Come live in me. Amen."

# Membership: Baptism

## BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

### Who is a candidate for baptism — babies or believers?

- Those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins are candidates for baptism. Those that have accepted His message. *Acts 2:41*

### What is the purpose of baptism — salvation or symbolism?

- Baptism shows a beautiful picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The purpose is to symbolically profess new life through salvation in Jesus Christ. *Romans 6:1–4*

### What is the method of baptism — sprinkling or immersion?

- It is biblical to immerse—the Greek word baptizo means to immerse under water. There are other Greek words for pour and sprinkle, but they are never used in the New Testament for baptism.

### Who has the authority to baptize?

- Someone under the proper authority has proper authority. Three documented groups of people performed baptisms in the New Testament — the apostles, deacons, and laymen. *Acts 8 & 9*

**Baptism will be accepted by Houston's First if the person was baptized after salvation, by immersion under water as a symbolic testimony of their new life in Christ, and if it was administered under the proper authority of a church, ministry, or mission effort of like faith and order in regard to biblical doctrine as stated in The Baptist Faith & Message.**



# Our Beliefs

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## **BIBLICALLY CONSERVATIVE**

The belief that the Bible is God's true, inerrant, inspired, and revelatory word for man to follow.

## **BIBLICALLY EVANGELICAL**

Believers that embrace the core beliefs revealed in the Scriptures regarding saving faith and sharing the gospel.

## **PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER**

Laypersons have the same right as ordained ministers to communicate with God, interpret Scripture, and minister in Christ's name. This in no way contradicts the biblical role, responsibility, and authority of pastoral leadership and the layperson's response to it.

## **ACCOUNTABLE**

Each person is accountable before God. Your family or church cannot save you. Individuals must decide for themselves whether or not to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and live accordingly.

## **AUTONOMOUS**

Our church is free to determine its membership and direction under the headship of Jesus Christ. We may partner with other associations, churches, conventions, and ministries as the Lord leads.

## **SUMMARY OF BASIC BELIEFS**

The doctrinal statement of our faith and practice is called The Baptist Faith & Message. The following is only a brief, partial summary, but a full text is available online at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org).

### **The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.

### **God**

There is one and only one living and true God...The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### **God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace... God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary...He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.

### **God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God...He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment...He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

### **Man**

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. By his free choice, man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

### **Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

### **God's Purpose Of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace but shall persevere to the end.

### **The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel and seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. This church is an autonomous body. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

### **Baptism & the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

# Our Affiliations

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## **UNION BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (UBA)**

A local network of churches in the Greater Houston Area. ([UBAHouston.org](http://UBAHouston.org))

## **SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OF TEXAS CONVENTION (SBTC) / BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS (BGCT)**

Two broad networks of churches throughout Texas with which we are dually aligned. ([SBTexas.com](http://SBTexas.com) / [TexasBaptists.org](http://TexasBaptists.org))

## **SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION (SBC)**

40,000+ churches that cooperate together in a worldwide missions effort. ([SBC.net](http://SBC.net))

## **INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD (IMB)**

The IMB partners with local churches to empower limitless missionary teams who are making disciples and multiplying churches among unreached people and places to the glory of God. ([IMB.org](http://IMB.org))

## **NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD (NAMB)**

The NAMB mobilizes Southern Baptists as a missional force to impact North America with the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism, church planting, and compassion ministry. ([NAMB.net](http://NAMB.net))



# Church Structure & Leadership

## CHURCH STRUCTURE

- Pastor-led
- Staff-run
- Deacon-served
- Committee-reviewed
- Congregation-approved

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- Finance
- Personnel
- Selection
- Fitness & Recreation
- Facilities
- Missions
- Benevolence
- Counseling
- Preschool
- Scholarship
- Security

## LEADERSHIP



**Senior Pastor, Gregg Matte**  
Gregg.Matte@HoustonsFirst.org



**Executive Pastor, Stephen Trammell**  
Stephen.Trammell@HoustonsFirst.org



**Missions Pastor, Clark Reynolds**  
Clark.Reynolds@HoustonsFirst.org



**Director of Operations, Chad Hamm**  
Chad.Hamm@HoustonsFirst.org

## CAMPUS PASTORS



**Campus Pastor – Cypress, Jason Swiggart**  
Jason.Swiggart@HoustonsFirst.org



**Campus Pastor – Downtown, Leon Brooks III**  
Leon.Brooks@HoustonsFirst.org



**Campus Pastor – Sienna, Malcolm Marshall**  
Malcolm.Marshall@HoustonsFirst.org



# MISSIONS

Our missions team is based at The Loop Campus or in our Faith Centers across the city.

## CornerBooks, Bookstore & Library

**Jen Sharp**

Jen.Sharp@HoustonsFirst.org

## Houston's First Deaf Church

**Josh Bruffey**

Josh.Bruffey@HoustonsFirst.org

## Legacy 68:5, Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care

**Toni Steere**

Toni.Steere@HoustonsFirst.org

## Minister of Mission Engagement

**Justin Steele**

Justin.Steele@HoustonsFirst.org

## Faith Center-Harwin

**Brad Hodges**

Brad.Hodges@HoustonsFirst.org

## Faith Center-Spring Branch

**Claudia Reyes**

Claudia.Reyes@HoustonsFirst.org

## Faith Center-Spring Branch Food Pantry & Clothes Closet

**Marinec Urdaneta**

Marinec.Urdaneta@HoustonsFirst.org

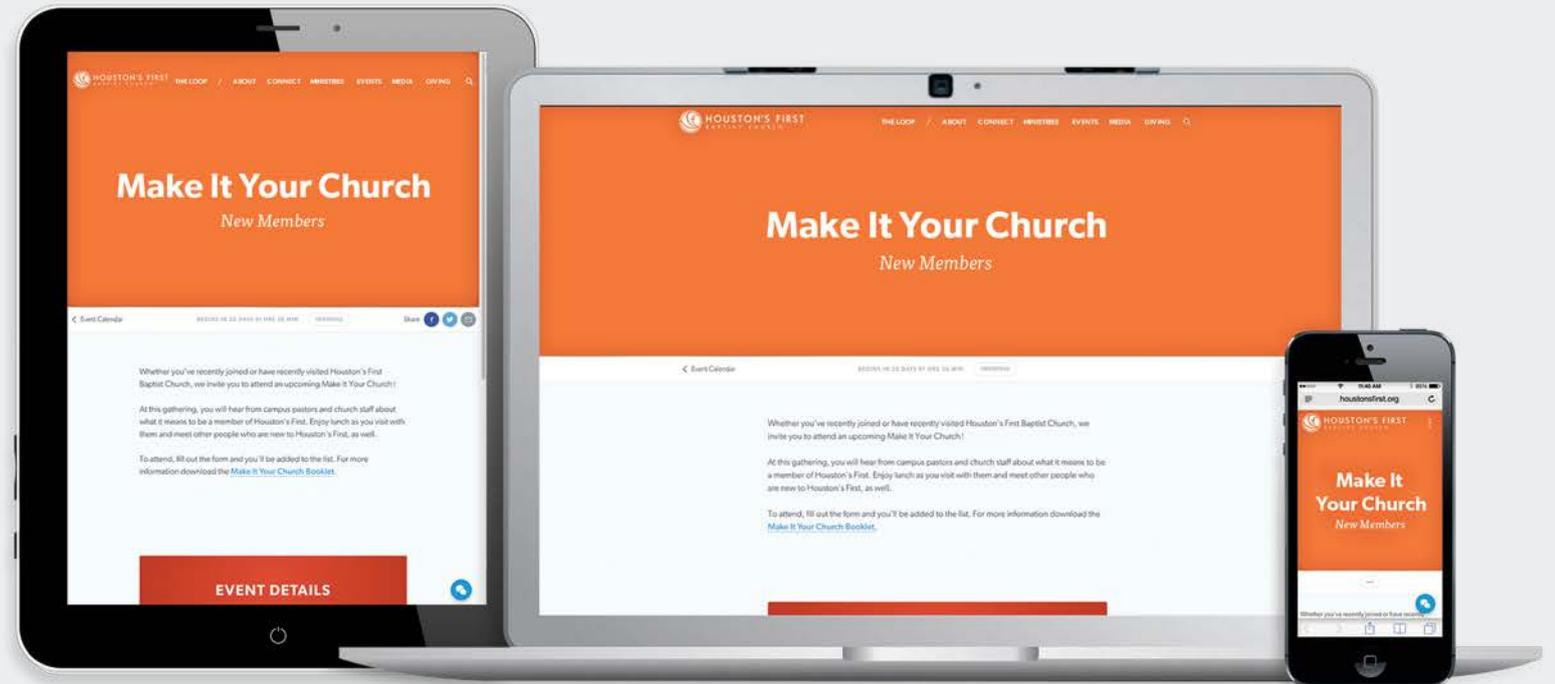


*welcome.*

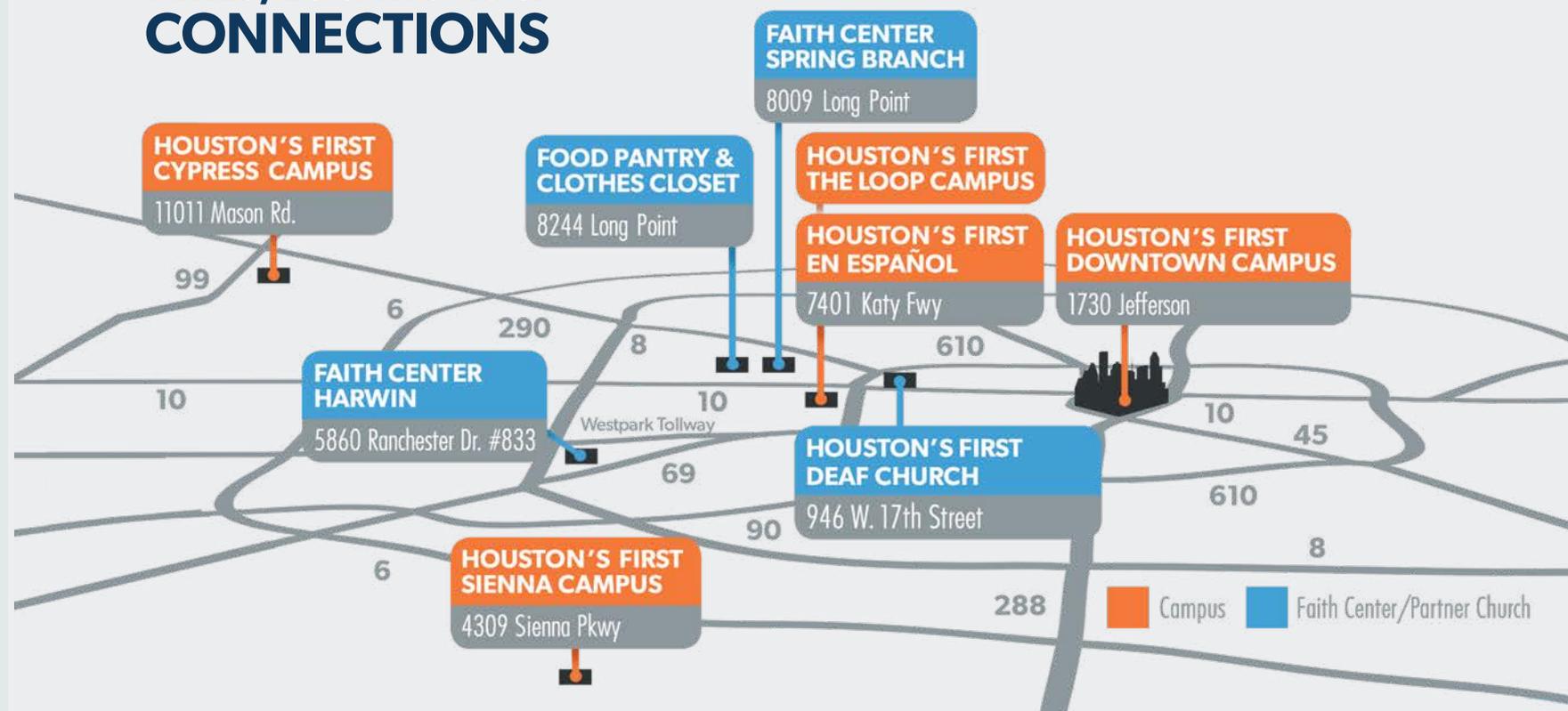


# Have more questions?

Connect with us at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org)!



## TIMES, LOCATIONS & CONNECTIONS



### THE LOOP CAMPUS

**Worship** 9:15a • 11a • 4p | en Español 11a  
**Life Bible Studies** 8a • 9:15a • 10:45a  
5:30p • en Español 9:15a

### CYPRESS CAMPUS

**Worship** 9:30a • 11a • 4p  
**Life Bible Studies** 8a • 9:30a  
11a • 5:30p

### DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

**Worship** 9:30a • 11a  
**Life Bible Studies** 9:30a • 11a

### SIENNA CAMPUS

**Worship** 9a • 10:45a  
**Life Bible Studies** 9a • 10:45a

### ONLINE

**Worship** 9:15a • 11a • 5p  
@HoustonsFirst | HoustonsFirst  
@HoustonsFirst | HoustonsFirst.org