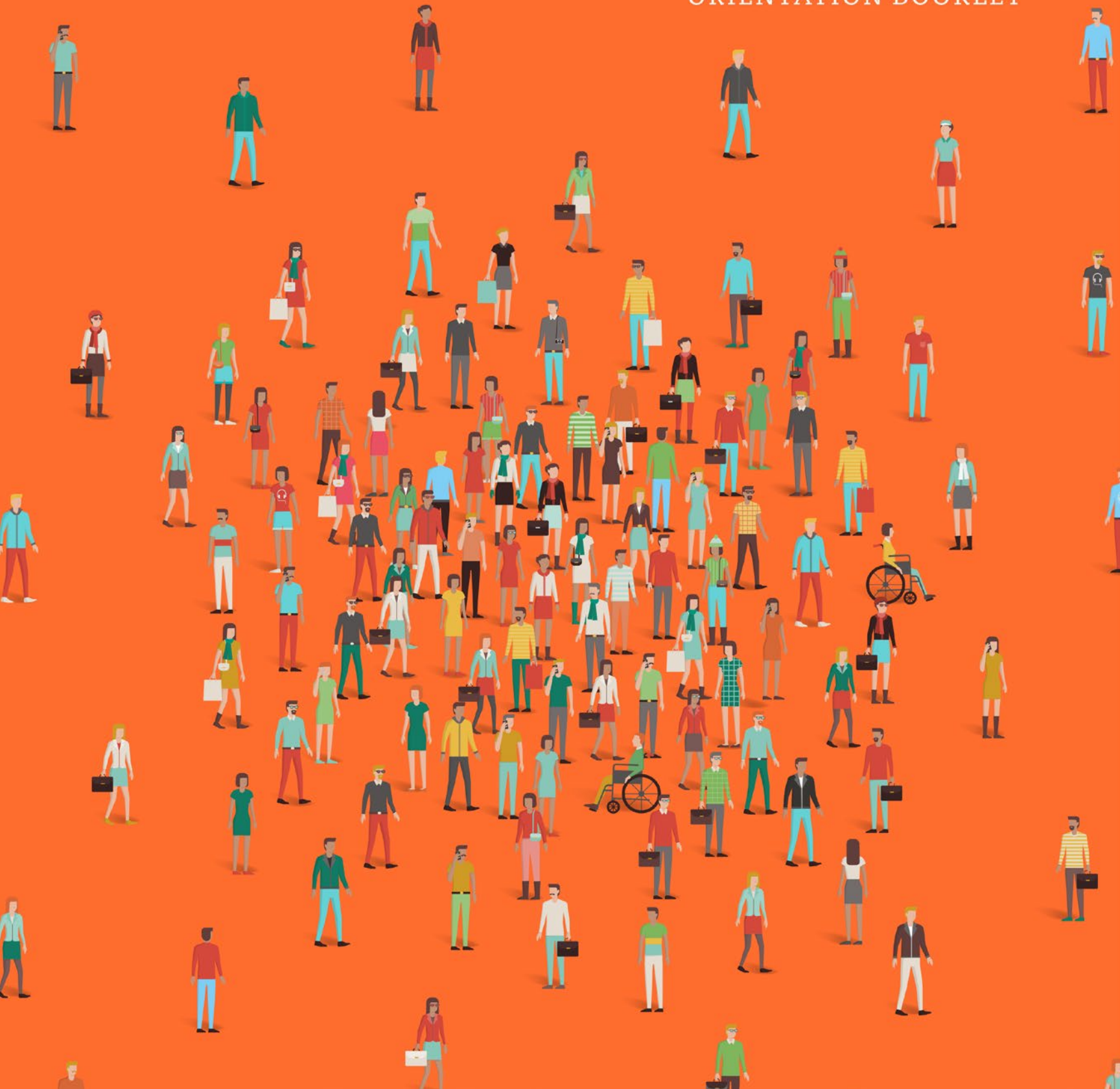


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ORIENTATION BOOKLET



welcome.



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**WHAT'S
INSIDE**

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SIGNATURE STATEMENTS

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

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



GROW OUR SOULS



GIVE OUR LIVES



LEARNING THE LINGO:

HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS AN EVANGELICAL, CONSERVATIVE, AND BAPTIST CHURCH.

CONSERVATIVE

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

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.

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.

The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion.

Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly. The dead will be raised and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell. The righteous will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Evangelism & Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations and to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personally sharing their faith.

Education

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence...There should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility...The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are belongs to Him. Christians have a spiritual debt to the whole world, a holy trust in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They therefore have the privilege and calling to serve Him with their time, talents and material possessions.

Cooperation

Christ's people should...organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches...Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations.

The Christian Social Order

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society...The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness and vice.

Religious Liberty

Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends...A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal.

Family

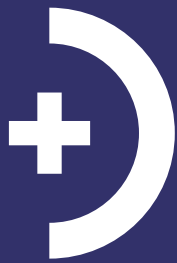
God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society...Marriage is the unity of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime...The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people...Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord.

Southern Baptist Convention

The term "Southern Baptist Convention" refers to both the denomination and its annual meeting. Working through 1,200 local associations and 41 state conventions and fellowships, Southern Baptists share a common bond of basic biblical beliefs (*The Baptist Faith & Message*) and a commitment to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire world.

DIFFERENCE MAKER EXPECTATIONS

Difference Makers is a movement that calls us to live a life of impact and purpose. As a church, Houston's First has made a difference in our community and around the globe since 1841. Our collective impact comes from thousands of men, women, and children over the years – and today – living out the truth found in our Difference Maker Declaration.



DIFFERENCE MAKERS *resources*

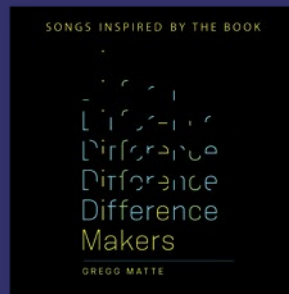
THE SERIES

Pastor Gregg looks at how difference makers are called to live on purpose at work, home, and church in this five-part series from July 14–Aug 11, 2019. Find these and other messages on HoustonsFirst.org, our app, or iTunes.



THE BOOK

Pastor Gregg's newest book reminds us that the first step to being a difference maker is having a difference made in ourselves through the power of the Gospel. Available from CornerBooks, Amazon, LifeWay, and other retailers.



THE ALBUM

Connecting the heart of the movement through song, the album features 10 original songs by our First Worship team—and Pastor Gregg co-wrote the title song. Available on iTunes and from CornerBooks.

DIFFERENCE MAKER DECLARATION

I was made for more than watching.

I have a history-changing, difference-making, life-giving, Spirit-empowered legacy to leave

Jesus, I ask You to work deeply in me and clearly through me as I pray, give, and go in Your love.

I am a Difference Maker.

In Jesus' name, Amen!

“WHAT DOES THAT SYMBOL MEAN?”



Jesus had a positive impact on the lives of people He encountered throughout His ministry on earth. At the cross and the empty tomb, His impact on the world was made permanent for all of eternity with His sacrifice for our sins and His victory over death echoing throughout the ages.

That truth is captured in the Difference Maker symbol. The plus sign signifies the positive impact Jesus made for us, and the arc resembles an echo or a ripple effect extending His message beyond a single point in time.

When you make a difference today, that positive act can have far-reaching effects beyond what you may ever realize. Your kind gesture or words of encouragement, the time you dedicate to help someone in need, the years of dedicated service to a worthy cause—only God knows the long-lasting impact that has and how many people you inspire to do the same!

A healthy church member (and an impactful Difference Maker) will grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ in the areas of **Gathering**, **Growing**, and **Giving**. Our expectation is that each member will **Gather** for one hour per week, **Grow** for one hour per week, and **Give** for one hour per week. A healthy member of Houston's First will participate in all three areas.

GATHER OUR HEARTS

Houston's First gathers for Worship each Sunday at campuses across our city. At each campus, you'll experience worship through music and the teaching of God's Word (the Bible) by Pastor Gregg in person or via a live video link, or a live message from your local campus staff.

GROW OUR SOULS

The purpose of the Grow Strategy is to help people deepen their walk with Christ, be transformed to His likeness, surrendered further to His Lordship, thirst for His Word, and love Him more deeply. Life Bible Studies are offered weekly, and Milestones Courses are offered throughout the year on various days of the week.

GIVE OUR LIVES

At Houston's First, we give our lives through missions, volunteering, evangelism, prayer and financial contributions.

GATHERING OUR HEARTS

Houston's First gathers for worship each Sunday at campuses around Houston. No matter which campus you attend, you'll find powerful worship music, teaching by Pastor Gregg Matte, and Life Bible Studies where you can connect with others as you study God's Word further.

THE LOOP

After more than 130 years of ministry in Downtown Houston, our church moved to our location on the Katy Freeway in 1977 on what was still considered by some to be the "outskirts" of town. The 610 Loop and Galleria were just a few years old at the time, but quickly grew into a thriving center of commerce and activity.

Over the past few decades, Houston's First has ministered to our city from this busy corner at I-10 and the 610 Loop and has grown along the way with the addition of the Fitness & Recreation Center, First Baptist Academy, the south tower, an expanded Counseling Center, the Preschool & Children's building, and the water wall and cross tower.

The Loop Campus is more than just a campus for our church. With its central location in the city and state-of-the-art features, the campus has become a frequent venue for outside events as well, such as concerts, conferences, and other special gatherings.

LOCATION

7401 Katy Freeway
Houston, TX 77024

SUNDAYS

Life Bible Studies @ 8a, 9:15a, 10:45a & 6:30p
En Español 9:15a







Worship @ 9:15a, 11a & 5p
En Español 11a



Gregg Matte

Pastor
PastorGregg@HoustonsFirst.org

STAY CONNECTED

 HoustonsFirst  GreggMatte
 @HoustonsFirst  @GreggMatte
 @HoustonsFirst  @PastorGregg

OTHER WAYS TO GATHER

When you're not able to gather with Houston's First in person, take advantage of these additional resources:

Live Webcast

Sundays at HoustonsFirst.org, YouTube.com/HoustonsFirst, or Facebook.com/HoustonsFirst @ 9:15a, 11a, & 5p

On-Demand Video & Audio Messages

HoustonsFirst.org

Podcast

Search for Houston's First Baptist Church messages on iTunes or your favorite podcast app

Messages On Air

Sundays on KHCB 105.7 FM @ 11a

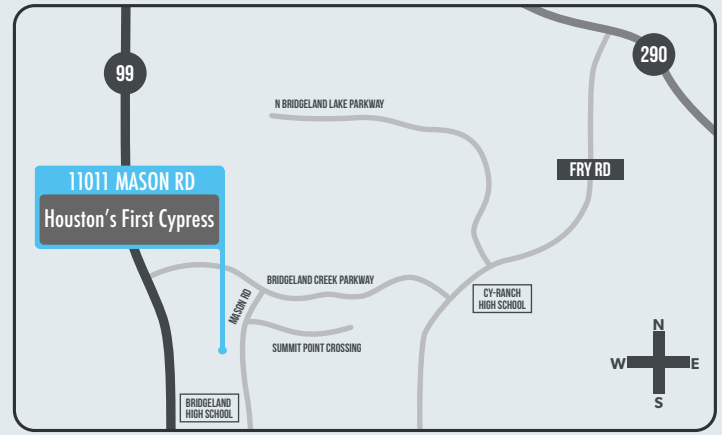


CYPRESS

The northwest region of the greater Houston area is growing at a rapid pace with more and more homes being built every year. Houston's First recognized this trend and wanted to be a part of the community where so many new people were moving and where many of our members already lived. So, the church launched our Cypress Campus in 2013.

We met at Smith Middle School every Sunday for four years and had separate rented space that served as a Ministry Center for offices and weekday programs. Despite not having a permanent place of our own, we went on annual mission trips, partnerships were formed with local ministries, and our church family stepped up to serve the community in a variety of ways.

Then, thanks to the generosity of the Houston's First family, we moved in to a new facility in 2017 next door to a Cy-Fair ISD educational village—including Bridgeland High School. Just like during our time at Smith Middle School, worship services on Sundays feature a live band and a video link with Pastor Gregg Matte's message live from The Loop Campus. In addition, Life Bible Studies are offered for all ages—birth through adults.






LOCATION

11011 Mason Rd.
Cypress, TX 77433

SUNDAYS

Life Bible Studies @ 8a, 9:30a & 11a
Worship @ 9:30a & 11a

STAY CONNECTED

-  [HoustonsFirstCypress](#)
-  [@HFBCcypress](#)
-  [@HFBCcypress](#)



Jason Swiggart

Cypress Campus Pastor
Jason.Swiggart@HoustonsFirst.org



DOWNTOWN

Downtown has come a long way since Houston's First was founded in 1841. It has even changed since Houston's First moved from Downtown to The Loop Campus in 1977. Sports and arts venues, residential and retail establishments, transportation and infrastructure improvements—the list goes on and on. But one thing hasn't changed: the need for the Good News of Jesus Christ.

On October 2, 2011, Houston's First went back to where we started with the message that keeps us going. The Downtown Campus began meeting at the tunnel level of 1010 Lamar, the office tower on the block where we ministered to the city for generations and the location of HighPoint Bible Study. In late 2016, The Lord provided an office building at 1730 Jefferson Street, where the Downtown Campus would move in March of 2017. Just two blocks south of the Toyota Center, the campus positions us to minister to the thousands of residents who live Downtown and along the current and future METRO Rail lines.

The Downtown Campus is a diverse community with a high-energy passion for reaching the heart of the city. Worship Services feature a live band, video messages by Pastor Gregg or local messages by campus staff, and live testimonies. Kids' Worship is available for children, K-6th grade. Life Bible Studies are available for birth-12th grade, college students, and adults of all ages.

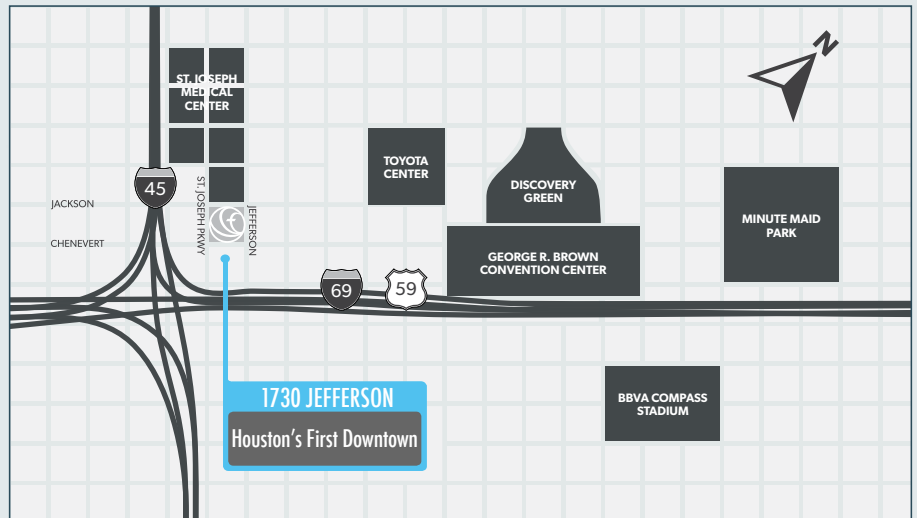
LOCATION

1730 Jefferson St.
Houston, TX 77003

SUNDAYS

Life Bible Studies @ 9:30a & 11a


Worship @ 9:30a & 11a



Leon Brooks III

Minister of Campus Development
Leon.Brooks@HoustonsFirst.org

STAY CONNECTED

-  HFBCDowntown
-  @HFBCDowntown
-  @HFBCDowntown



SIENNA

In the summer of 2012, just four days after Houston's First decided to become a multi-site church, talks began with the leadership of Grace Church in Sienna Plantation about the possibility of a partnership. Prayer and planning brought two churches together to become the Sienna Campus of Houston's First. The launch was on Easter Sunday in March 2013.

Now, residents in outlying communities in southwest Houston, Sugar Land, Pearland and Missouri City worship together under the umbrella of Houston's First Baptist Church. The usual Sunday worship services feature a live band and a message from Pastor Gregg Matte via a live link at 9:30a and 11a.

LOCATION

4309 Sienna Pkwy
Missouri City, TX 77459




SUNDAYS

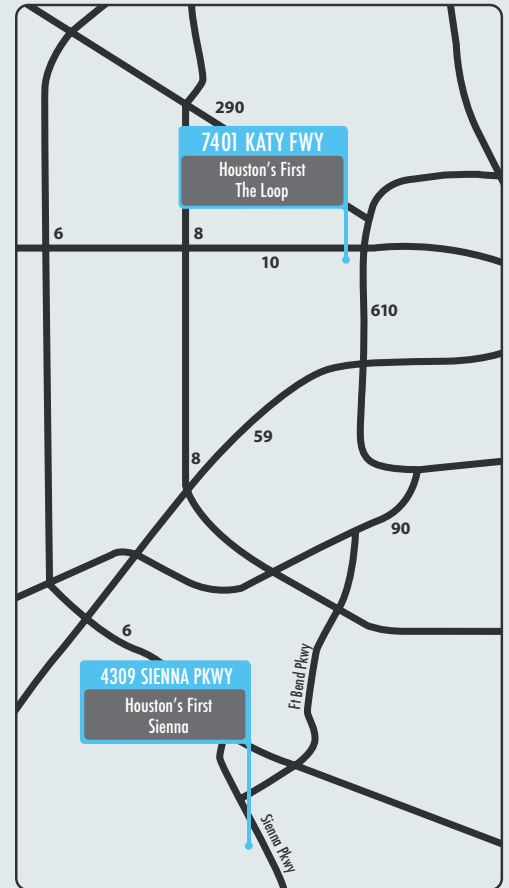
Life Bible Studies @ 9:30a & 11a
Worship @ 9:30a & 11a



Malcolm Marshall
Sienna Campus Pastor
Malcolm.Marshall@HoustonsFirst.org

STAY CONNECTED

-  HoustonsFirstSienna
-  @HFBCSienna
-  @HFBCSienna



SECTION 4

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth; however, He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called "ordinances") as reminders of His death. The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

1. **WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?** *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*
2. It is a simple act. "The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread..." *vs. 23*
3. It is **A REMEMBRANCE**. "...and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; eat it in remembrance of Me.'" *vs. 24*
4. It is **A REMINDER OF CHRIST'S DEATH**. "In the same way, He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember Me.'" *vs. 25*
5. It is a statement of faith. "For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes back." *vs. 26*

WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

6. Only those who are already believers. "For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment upon himself." *2 Corinthians 11:29*
7. Children who have accepted Christ and understand the ceremony (parental determination) are allowed and encouraged to participate.
8. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. *1 Corinthians 11:27-28*

Worthy manner = not taking it lightly or irreverently

WHEN & HOW OFTEN DOES OUR CHURCH OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Generally, we partake of the Lord's Supper at Houston's First Baptist Church quarterly in our worship services. Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper. A benevolent or designated non-profit offering is taken after each Lord's Supper.

SECTION 5

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT TITHING

WHAT IS TITHING?

"Tithe" means a 10th part.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TITHE AND AN OFFERING?

A "tithe" is giving a **tenth** of my income.

An "offering" is anything I give **IN ADDITION** to my tithe.

A tithe in the Old Testament was **REQUIRED** by God, while offerings were freewill.

Generosity

AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

Giving back to the Lord is a form of worship, so receiving tithes and offerings is a part of each of our worship services. No matter where you fall on the generosity ladder, we encourage you to discover the blessings that come when you give back to the Lord.

THREE WAYS TO GIVE:

ONSITE

Collection boxes

ONLINE

HoustonsFirst.org

ON MOBILE

Text HFBCGIVE to 81411 or download the Houston's First Baptist Church app and use the GIVE feature.

TITHES

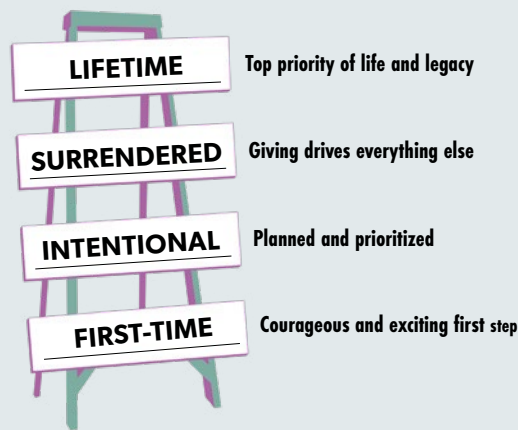
1. Onsite / Online / On Mobile
2. Stock Gifts
3. Planned Giving (wills, estates, etc.)

OFFERINGS

1. World Mission Offering
2. General Missions
3. Missionary Journeys
4. Benevolence
5. Disaster Relief Fund

WHY PEOPLE GIVE

1. It's a part of discipleship.
2. It's an act of worship.
3. It's an expression of gratitude.
4. It's a statement about what we believe and how seriously we believe it.



THE KEY TO GIVING

"... they first gave themselves to the Lord ..." [2 Corinthians 8:5](#)

REASONS WHY I SHOULD TITHE ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD

1. Because God commands it. "A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is Holy." [Leviticus 27:30](#)
2. Because Jesus commanded it. [Matthew 23:23](#)
3. Tithing demonstrates that God has first place. "The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives." [Deuteronomy 14:23, Living Bible](#)
4. Tithing reminds me that everything was given to me 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 my gratitude. "How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me?" [Psalms 116:12](#)
6. God says that refusing to tithe is stealing from Him! "God says 'Will a Man rob God? Yet you are robbing me.' But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' God says 'In tithes and offerings...Bring your whole tithe to my house.'" [Malachi 3:8-10](#)
7. Tithing gives God a chance to prove He exists and wants to bless you! "Bring your whole tithes to My storehouse. Test me in this says the Lord, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you won't have room enough for it! I will prevent pests from devouring your crops and the vines in your fields will be protected from plagues." [Malachi 3:8-10](#)
8. Obedience in tithing is a proof that I really love God. Jesus said, "If you really love me, do what I command." [John 14:15](#)



Houston's First Baptist Church is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), an accrediting organization that is dedicated to helping Christian ministries and churches uphold high standards of responsible stewardship. For more information, visit [ECFA.church](#).

SECTION 6

GROWING OUR SOULS

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the **Grow Strategy** is to help people deepen their walk with Christ, be transformed to His likeness, surrender further to His Lordship, thirst for His Word, and love Him more deeply. The primary tools of the Grow Strategy are Life Bible Study and Milestones.

LIFE BIBLE STUDY

Life Bible Study is a weekly, small group **Gathering** of the church, welcoming believers and seekers alike to experience **Growing** faith in Christ. Studying God's Word creates Christians who are committed to **Giving** away their lives by loving and serving those who need it most.



Milestones is a framework of adult discipleship that extends beyond Life Bible Studies to equip people in a particular stage of life, special situation, or in general discipleship. This is accomplished through semester-long courses, one-time classes, and special events.



 GROW

SECTION 7

GIVING OUR LIVES

At Houston's First, we give our lives through missions, volunteering, evangelism, prayer and financial contributions.

MISSIONS

We desire to see the Gospel advanced throughout our city, our nation, and our world. We are committed to doing three things through our mission endeavors:



- First, making disciples by planting churches in cities across the globe.
- Second, carrying the name of Jesus to nearly three billion unreached people.
 - Support for churches/ministry partners, people group adoption
- Third, bringing justice to dark places.
 - Orphans, health, trafficking, clean water, poverty, education

Ministry Team / Volunteering

We desire each member of Houston's First to use their gifts to serve the body of Christ, and each campus utilizes volunteers on ministry teams to help accomplish our mission of making disciples. To learn more about opportunities to serve at your campus, visit HoustonsFirst.org or speak with a staff member at your campus.

Local Outreach

Each campus strategically reaches out to their surrounding community throughout the year through various initiatives.

GO Houston

What started as a project of one young single adult Life Bible Study in 1997 is now a churchwide mission trip to our own city. For one week every July, missionaries from Houston's First give life away at ministry sites around Houston during the evening hours (Sun–Thu). They share the love of Christ through Vacation Bible School, youth activities, evangelism, prayer, adult Bible studies, sports ministry, and more.

Mission Trips

Houston's First sends dozens of teams on short-term missionary trips every year—in the United States and abroad. Our trips are aligned with the three commitments listed above. You'll find a full list of trips at HoustonsFirst.org. Two types of trips that may be of interest to new members of the Houston's First family are:

- Rookie Trips — over spring break to the Central America/Caribbean region
- Family Trips — designed for families with young children

By the way — we encourage every member to have a passport just in case God calls you to go! Visit travel.state.gov for details.



SERVING EXPECTATIONS

All members must fill out a NextGen application in order to serve or go on a mission trip at Houston's First Baptist Church. Visit HoustonsFirst.org to find the NextGen application and current volunteer opportunities at your campus or our Faith Centers.

Food Pantry & Clothes Closet

- **Spring Branch** (8244 Long Point Rd.)
Mon–Thu & Sat @ 10a–1p
- **Harwin** (5860 Ranchester, Suite 833)
Tue, Thu & Sat @ 10a–1p

Our Faith Centers in the Spring Branch and Harwin areas have Food Pantry & Clothes Closet ministries serving their communities. The Spring Branch location is just down the street from the Faith Center campus (8009 Long Point Rd.), and the Harwin location is housed along with that Faith Center. It takes 100 volunteers per week to run these two ministries! There are additional opportunities to serve with English as a Second Language (ESL), Kids' Club, after school tutoring and more.

All Campuses

Multiple volunteer opportunities exist with the Preschool Ministry, Children's Ministry, Student Ministry, Guest Experience (GX) Team, CornerBooks, and more.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

Houston's First encourages believers to discover their unique spiritual gifts. To enable that, we provide a free Spiritual Gifts Assessment online for each member! While completion of the assessment is not required to volunteer, it can better assist you in determining where to serve with your spiritual gifts. The assessment will look at your spiritual gifts, heart passions, personality traits, abilities and life experiences—providing you with guidance as you find a place to give life away.

To take the assessment:

1. Visit HFBC.Mobilyzr.com
2. In the Activation Code field, enter:
Cypress: **hfbc-cypress**
Downtown: **hfbc-downtown**
Español: **hfbc-espanol**
The Loop: **hfbc-loop**
Sienna: **hfbc-sienna**
3. Complete the assessment
(about 45 minutes to one hour)

EVANGELISM

The evangelism ministry at Houston's First serves as the church's resource for evangelism equipping, including the XEE and Kids' EE interactive training courses, one-day Share Your Faith workshops and evangelism curriculum for Life Bible Study leaders and classes. Gospel booklets in every language (some bilingual) are available for your use, and the Gospel story can be found online at HoustonsFirst.org. For information on evangelism classes offered through Milestones, visit HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT [Justin Seale](mailto:Justin.Seale@HoustonsFirst.org)
Local Missions
Justin.Seale@HoustonsFirst.org

PRAYER

Have a prayer request? In addition to sharing it directly with a staff member, you can:

- Submit your request online at HoustonsFirst.org
- Complete a prayer request card during a worship service
- Text **PRAYFIRST** to **81411** for a link to our prayer request form

If you are interested in serving with any of our prayer initiatives, know that we welcome your participation!

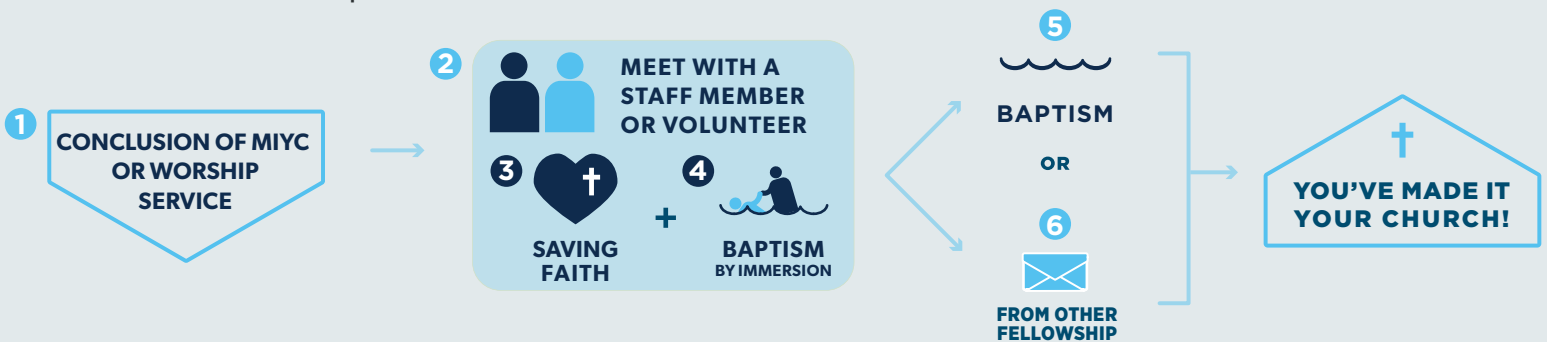
CONTACT Prayer@HoustonsFirst.org

SECTION 8

MEMBERSHIP

HOW DO YOU BECOME A MEMBER OF HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH?

Membership at Houston's First Baptist Church is open to anyone who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins and has been baptized by immersion by a body of believers of like faith and practice as well as agreement with Houston's First Baptist Church Statement of Faith and Church By-Laws. If you have not placed your faith in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and been baptized by immersion, we will assist you with these spiritual decisions. Speak with a staff member at your campus or stop by the Connection Center at the end of a Worship Service to being taking next steps towards church membership.



SECTION 9

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN: SAVING FAITH LIFE'S QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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 is 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 then you can sincerely say these things to God.

SINNER'S PRAYER

"Lord God, I know you are the creator of me. 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."

BAPTISM

WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE?

- Someone under proper authority has proper authority.
- Three documented groups of people who performed baptisms in the New Testament:
 - The Apostles – Paul and others
 - Deacons – Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8
 - Laymen – Ananias baptized Paul in Acts 9

Baptisms will be accepted by Houston's First Baptist Church 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*.

FAQS ABOUT BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

WHO IS A CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM?

Is it babies or **believers**?

- Those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins are candidates for baptism.
- Those that accepted His message. (Acts 2:41) This is referred to as believer's baptism.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM?

Is it for salvation or **symbolism**?

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Romans 6:1-4

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.

WHAT IS THE METHOD OF BAPTISM?

Greek word *baptizo* means to immerse under water.

- It is biblical to immerse; there are other Greek words for pour and sprinkle, but they are never used in the New Testament for baptism.
- Baptism defined in that time period:
 - o Plato – to immerse in wine (427–347 BC)
 - o Josephus – to sink a ship (37–100 AD)
 - o Plutarch – to be over your head and ears in debt (45–125 AD)

SECTION 10

RESOURCES

CORNERBOOKS

Extending the message, ministry, and mission of Houston's First, CornerBooks offers Bibles, books, music CDs, journals, coffee, and more. At The Loop Campus, choose from over 18,000 titles on our shelves for you to borrow!

CONTACT Jen Lewis, Interim CornerBooks Director
Jen.Lewis@HoustonsFirst.org
713.957.5822



COUNSELING CENTER

The purpose of the Julianna Poor Memorial Counseling Center is to provide biblically-based, clinically-competent, and Spirit-sensitive counseling to promote the emotional, psychological, and spiritual health of individuals, marriages, and families. We seek to help with personal and interpersonal problems through the application of biblical truths, with the Bible and the Holy Spirit as the primary agents in counseling and teaching. All sessions are by appointment only and are available at The Loop, Cypress, and Sienna Campuses. Evening and weekend sessions are available on a limited basis and vary by campus.

CONTACT 713.335.6462 to schedule an appointment



FITNESS & RECREATION

The Fitness & Recreation Center at The Loop Campus consists of two basketball courts, two racquetball courts, an elevated walking/jogging track, a fully equipped exercise and fitness center with weight machines and free weights, treadmills, ellipticals and more. If you have any questions or need additional information, call the Fitness & Recreation Center or visit us online.

CONTACT 713.957.6710



SINGLE PARENT FAMILY MINISTRY

The Single Parent Family Ministry of Houston's First provides an environment that will encourage spiritual growth, establish community and encounter a life that has meaning and purpose! It is a place where you can know others and be known, serve others and be served, love others and be loved, celebrate others and be celebrated. Whether you see yourself first a single or first as a parent we have a place for you. You will be embraced and brought into community and loved like family!

CONTACT **Holly Crain, Single Parent Family Ministry Associate**
Holly.Crain@HoustonsFirst.org
713.957.7674



LEGACY 685

Legacy 685, an adoption, foster, and global orphan care ministry of Houston's First Baptist Church, connects, equips, and sustains adoptive and foster families as well as global organizations serving vulnerable children and families. Legacy 685 provides opportunities for local families to gather and grow together at The Loop, Cypress, and Sienna Campuses, and mobilizes teams to serve alongside global orphan care partners in places like Guatemala and Kenya.

CONTACT **Toni Steere, Legacy 685 Director**
Legacy685@HoustonsFirst.org
713.335.6455



PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care provides ministry to individuals and families affected by illness, hospitalization, terminal diagnosis, disease and bereavement, as well as their long-term effects. We visit all area hospitals, health care and hospice facilities, and the homebound within a 75-mile radius of Houston's First. Among the many ways Pastoral Care ministers to the Houston's First family is through the Stephen Ministry, GriefShare, CanHOPE (cancer), Phase 2 (widows), The Gathering Place (memory loss), and others.

CONTACT **Dau Ayub, Minister of Pastoral Care**
Dau.Ayub@HoustonsFirst.org
713.957.6760



PASTORAL CARE

FIRST BAPTIST ACADEMY

First Baptist Academy is an Early Childhood–8th Grade educational community committed to the pursuit of knowledge and the development of wisdom in a Christ-centered setting. Their campus, shared with Houston's First Baptist Church at The Loop Campus, provides a familial setting in which Early Childhood & Primary (Infants–Pre-K), Lower School (K–4), and Middle School (5–8) students grow alongside one another. FBA stands among the city's most prestigious group of schools accredited by Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS) due to their rigorous academics, diverse athletics opportunities and an exceptional fine arts department.

CONTACT **Office of Admissions**
7450 Memorial Woods Dr., Houston, TX 77024
Admissions@HFBA.org, 713.290.2522
FBAHouston.org



FIRST HOPE JOB MINISTRY

The mission of the First H.O.P.E. Job Ministry is to Help Others Procure Employment. In other words, help people find a job if they don't have one currently or want to improve the one they have now.

CONTACT **Jacob Cowan, First H.O.P.E. Job Ministry Coordinator**
Jacob.Cowan@HoustonsFirst.org
713.554.8821



MEN: SERVE

From Exodus 22:22 to James 1:27, the importance of serving widows is clearly evident. As men who are called to lead through serving, Band of Brothers mobilizes teams of men across the city of Houston to serve widows of our church.

We are looking for men who are able to work and lead other men in serving, men who have lawn equipment and tools, or men who are simply willing to sweat in service to the King of Kings.

THE LOOP CAMPUS

CONTACT **Eric Reed, Men's Ministry/
Assistant to Minister of Education**
Eric.Reed@HoustonsFirst.org

CYPRESS CAMPUS

CONTACT Lyndle.Jackson@HoustonsFirst.org

SIENNA CAMPUS

CONTACT **Ron Barkley, Minister of
Campus Development**
Ron.Barkley@HoustonsFirst.org

THRU THE ROOF

Thru the Roof is the Special Needs Ministry of Houston's First Baptist Church housed at The Loop Campus. We believe it is all part of God's plan to care, love and welcome children and adults with special needs into our church fellowship and community. Therefore, we consider it a privilege to offer Life Bible Study classes, buddies for children, a well-trained staff of volunteers and caring individuals to make Sunday the best day of the week for your family member.

CONTACT **Daniel Williams, Minister to Special Needs Families**
Daniel.Williams@HoustonsFirst.org
713.957.7625



SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

SoFA offers instruction for children and adults, whether beginners or experts, in many disciplines to develop each student's God-given talents and abilities to their fullest potential.

HOW TO JOIN
Visit HoustonsFirst.org
to enroll.

REHEARSALS
Various dates and times

CONTACT
Mervin.Machuca@HoustonsFirst.org
713.957.5889



CHURCH STRUCTURE & STAFF MEMBER CONTACTS

You've learned about the mission, vision and strategy of Houston's First. Now, here's a look at how it operates and the staff members you can contact with any questions you might have.

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

The following is a partial list of the nearly 600 full-time and part-time employees who serve at Houston's First. Rather than presented as an organization chart, they are grouped here according to the primary area they support in our church's strategy — gather, grow, give, or administration/operations.

TEAM LEADS

Pastor, Gregg Matte

Gregg.Matte@HoustonsFirst.org

Executive Pastor, David Self

David.Self@HoustonsFirst.org

Multisite Pastor, Stephen Smith

Stephen.Smith@HoustonsFirst.org

Director of Missions, 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

Minister of Campus Development – Downtown, Leon Brooks III

Leon.Brooks@HoustonsFirst.org

Campus Pastor – Sienna, Malcolm Marshall

Malcolm.Marshall@HoustonsFirst.org

CAMPUS STAFF

In addition to the Team Leads and Campus Pastors listed above, you'll find a list of staff members who serve at your campus on the enclosed inserts.

ADMINISTRATION / OPERATIONS

These team members are based at The Loop Campus, but many of them provide services for each of our campuses.

Calendar and Special Events, Jan Butterfras

Jan.Butterfras@HoustonsFirst.org

Communications, Steven Murray

Steven.Murray@HoustonsFirst.org

Counseling, Adam Mason

Adam.Mason@HoustonsFirst.org

Culinary Services, Damen Sistrunk

Damen.Sistrunk@HoustonsFirst.org

Facilities, Andy Rodgers

Andy.Rodgers@HoustonsFirst.org

First Baptist Academy, Teresa Chambers

Teresa.Chambers@HFBA.org

ADMINISTRATION / OPERATIONS (CONTINUED)

Fitness & Recreation, Adam Dunlap

Adam.Dunlap@HoustonsFirst.org

Human Resources, Cindy Robinson

Cindy.Robinson@HoustonsFirst.org

Hunt Retreat, Bill Murrell

Bill.Murrell@HoustonsFirst.org

Information Technology, John Gunn

John.Gunn@HoustonsFirst.org

Production, Yoshi Haddad

Yoshi.Haddad@HoustonsFirst.org

Security, Nate Finn

Nate.Finn@HoustonsFirst.org

MISSIONS

Most of these team members are based at The Loop Campus, and many of them serve each of our campuses.

Assimilation, Kevin Spivey

Kevin.Spivey@HoustonsFirst.org

Mobilization, Ameer Omar

Ameer.Omar@HoustonsFirst.org

Legacy 685 (Adoption, Foster, and Orphan Care), Toni Steere

Toni.Steere@HoustonsFirst.org

CornerBooks, Jen Lewis

Jen.Lewis@HoustonsFirst.org

Local Missions, Justin Seale

Justin.Seale@HoustonsFirst.org

Faith Center – Spring Branch, Claudia Reyes

Claudia.Reyes@HoustonsFirst.org

Woodhaven Baptist Deaf Church, Josh Bruffey

Josh.Bruffey@HoustonsFirst.org

CHURCH HISTORY & AFFILIATIONS

Houston's First Baptist Church was organized in 1841 by 16 men and women, just five years after the Battle of the Alamo and before Texas became a state. Our church family has been ministering to the people of Houston—and beyond—ever since. The church has survived through wars, yellow fever epidemics, and the 1900 Galveston Hurricane, which destroyed one of our early church buildings. Members of our church helped pioneer Baylor University, the Star of Hope Mission and the Baptist (Memorial) Hospital System and School of Nursing.

In 1970, Houston's First called John Bisagno as pastor. The church experienced phenomenal growth, and in 1977 moved to The Loop Campus at the Katy Freeway. Bro. John retired in 2000, and on Easter Sunday, April 11, 2004, Gregg Matte was called as our 35th pastor. Under Pastor Gregg's leadership, the church is growing with a thriving Life Bible Study ministry, campuses around Houston, and numerous local, national, and international missional endeavors.

OUR AFFILIATIONS

Union Baptist Association (UBA) — A local network of churches in the Greater Houston Area (UBAHouston.org)

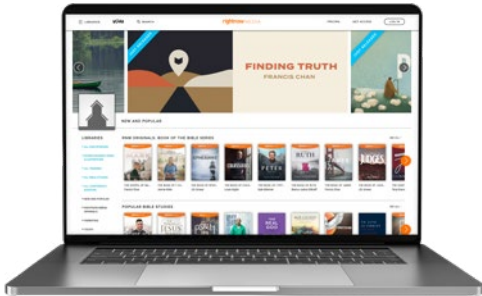
Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) / Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) — We are dually aligned with these broad networks of churches throughout Texas (SBTexas.com / TexasBaptists.org).

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) — 40,000+ churches that cooperate together in a worldwide missions effort (SBC.net)

International Mission Board (IMB) IMB.org

North American Mission Board (NAMB) namb.net

rightnow MEDIA



FREE GIFT!



Get access to over 20,000 online Bible study videos on all topics for every life-stage such as...

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- ▶ **Plus, there is a HUGE library of biblical children's content including *Veggie Tales*, *What's in The Bible*, *Boz*, and much more!**
- ▶ **Once you create a FREE account you'll be able to access this amazing library on your mobile device, tablet, computer, or TV streaming device!**

As a church we hope this will help you grow closer to the Lord, equip you in discipleship, and be a blessing to your family! There are two ways to set up your free account:

1 ONLINE

Go to HoustonsFirst.org and either:

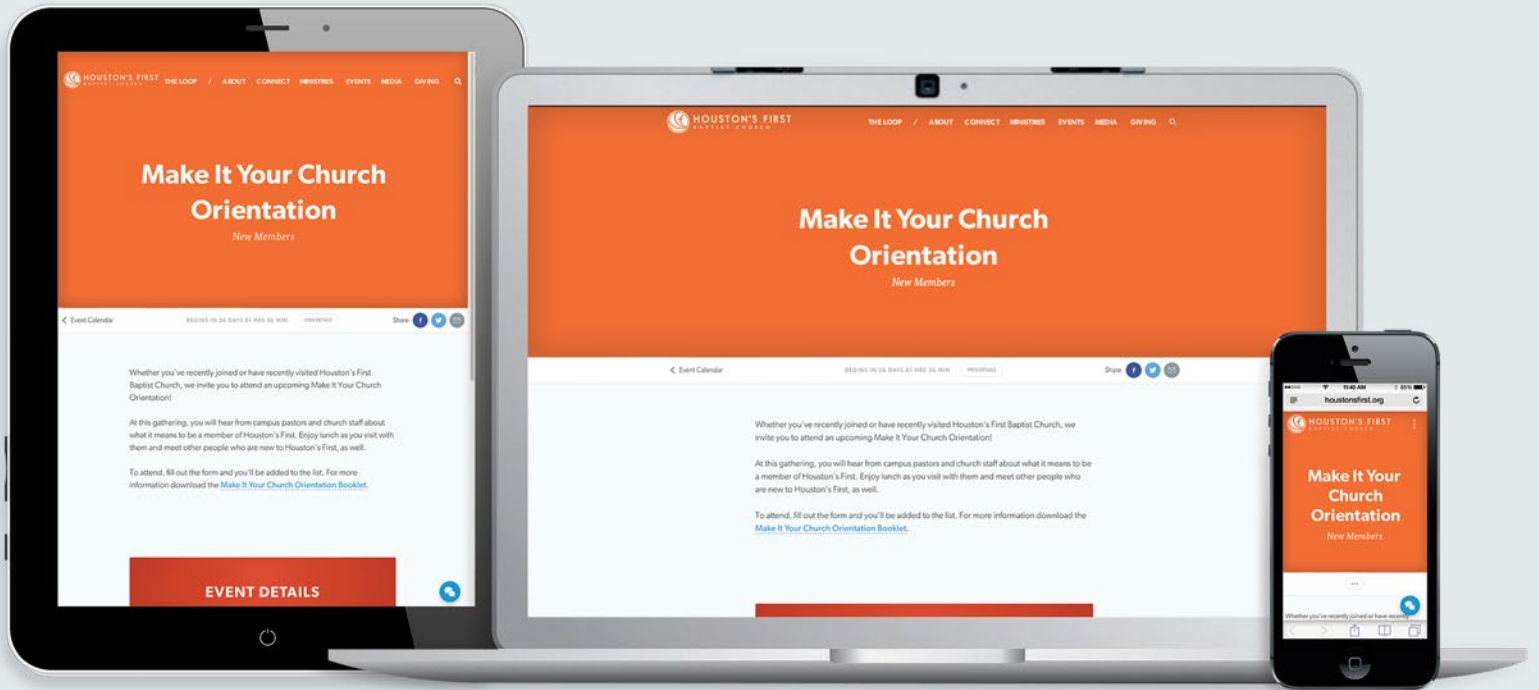
- Search for "RightNow Media" or
- Go to **Media > Other Resources** and click on **RightNow Media**

2 ON MOBILE

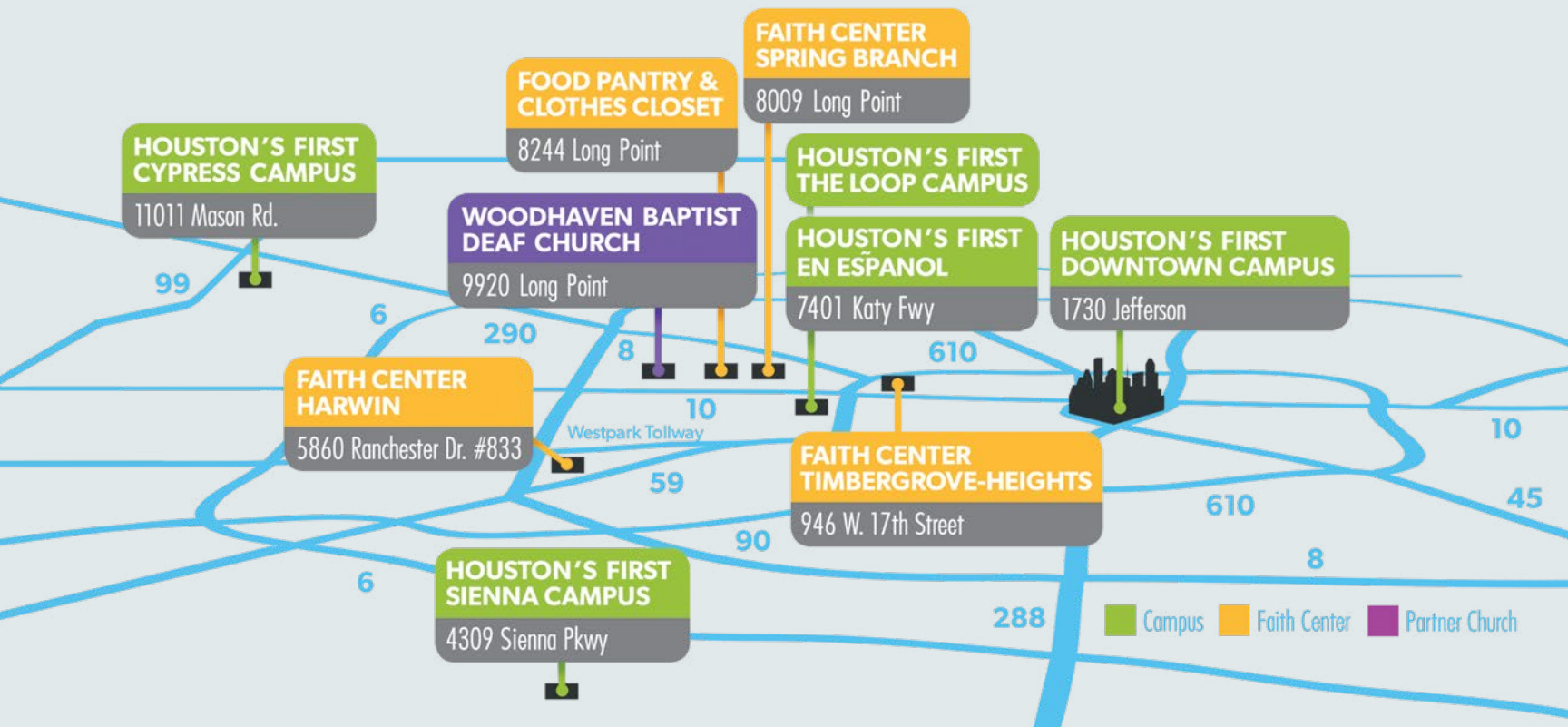
Text **RIGHTNOWMEDIA** to **81411** for a link

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

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



TIMES, LOCATIONS & CONNECTIONS



The Loop Campus

Worship 9:15a • 11a • 5p | en Español 11a
Life Bible Studies 8a • 9:15a • 10:45a • 6:30p
 en Español 9:15a

Cypress Campus

Worship 9:30a • 11a
Life Bible Studies 8a • 9:30a • 11a

Downtown Campus

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

Sienna Campus

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

Online

Worship 9:15a • 11a • 5p
 HoustonFirst HoustonFirst
 HoustonFirst.org