

WELCOME TO HOUSTON'S FIRST!

We're glad you've joined us as we celebrate Christ's resurrection. If you're a guest today and are not familiar with Houston's First—great! Our church family at each campus openly welcomes new people, no matter where you are in your relationship with Christ or the Christian faith. Besides, we were all new at one point ourselves!

Our vision as a church is to be a relevant biblical community. In essence, that means we make applicable connections to real life issues, we focus on and follow what the Bible says, and we provide a place where encouraging relationships can flourish. Houston's First is a great place to be!

At the end of the worship service today, I encourage you to come forward and ask questions about the church, the Christian faith, or anything on your mind. Volunteers and staff members are available to answer your questions, pray with you, or simply listen.

As we celebrate Christ's victory over death, I pray that we would have a renewed appreciation for how God rescued each one of us—and how He delights in us, too! If you're hearing about God's love, Jesus, or the meaning of the empty tomb for the first time today, come back to Houston's First to discover more. That's just what being a relevant biblical community is all about.

He is Risen!

Pastor Gregg

Pastor Gregg Matte

RECENT AND UPCOMING MESSAGES

Pastor Gregg's messages are available at HoustonsFirst.org, on iTunes, and on CD at CornerBooks.

We Can Work It Out: Marriage — Mar 22 & 29 — Ephesians 5:19-32
Navigating the roles of husband and wife — and how to protect your marriage

We Can Work It Out: Parenting — Apr 12 & 19 — Ephesians 6:1-4
Guidance for parents and children on how to rightly relate to one another

Spiritual Warfare — May 3, 10 & 17 — Ephesians 6:10-17
Inspecting the armor of God we need to stand against the tactics of the devil



MAKE IT YOUR CHURCH ORIENTATION

Sun, Apr 26 — All Campuses

Discover what it means to be a member of a relevant biblical community! Offered at each campus, this free gathering—over lunch or dinner—is an opportunity to meet staff members, ask questions, and get answers about Houston's First. RSVP at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.

NEWS + UPDATES

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

TWEET OF THE WEEK: "Great word on protecting your marriage by @GreggMatte @HoustonsFirst ... marriage is different than other relationships." — @ChambersChad

ALL CAMPUSES

HighPoint Bible Study
Wednesdays @ 11:30a
This weekly downtown Bible study meets in the Wells Fargo Plaza auditorium (1000 Louisiana) with Dr. David Self speaking. Bring your lunch and be ready for the lesson at 12:10p. Visit HoustonsFirst.org/HighPoint to learn more.
CONTACT Diane.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

Widows & Widowers Spring Luncheon
Sat, Apr 11 @ 11:30a — **The Loop (Fellowship Ctr)**
The Deacon Care Committee and Pastoral Care Ministries host this gathering honoring the widows and widowers of our church family. If you would like to attend, call Pastoral Care at 713.957.6760 to RSVP.
CONTACT Peggy.Jones@HoustonsFirst.org

Three Strands Marriage Retreat
May 29-31 — **Jordan Ranch, Schulenburg, TX**
Facilitated by Sienna Campus Pastor Jeff Rees and his wife Martha, this weekend will equip you with insights and tools and you'll leave with a better understanding of yourself and your spouse. It's open to members and non-members of Houston's First, so get details and register at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Jeff.Rees@HoustonsFirst.org

NEXTGEN MINISTRIES
Spring Weekend of Choir (SWOC)
Apr 23-25 — **The Loop**
At this power-packed weekend, 1st-5th graders will prepare and present an entire musical! Along the way, they'll learn about the Bible, play crazy games, and more. SWOC happens Thu & Fri @ 6-8:30p and Sat @ 9a-2p, and the musical is presented Sat @ 6p! Register at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Joy.Harris@HoustonsFirst.org

Camp Intersect
Jun 15-19 — **Trinity Pines Conf Center**
Two camps, one location! This amazing camp full of worship and teaching, outdoor activities, and crazy fun is for kids and their friends entering 4th-7th grades this fall. Sign up at HoustonsFirst.org/Events. (Early Bird rate ends Apr 30!)
CONTACT Derek.Nease@HoustonsFirst.org

Rush Week
Jul 19-25 — **Panama City Beach, FL**
This unique missions experience has elements of a mission trip but with a "camp" feel. Students currently in 6th-12th grades can choose different types of service to help a local church/community. Visit HoustonsFirst.org/Events for details and to register.
CONTACT Susan.Newman@HoustonsFirst.org

YOUNG SINGLE ADULTS
Summit Spring Retreat: Simplify
May 1-3 — **Trinity Pines Conference Center**
Young single adults will see that addition can occur through subtraction as they learn how to simplify their lives and get back to the basics of faith, friendship, and fun! Details and registration at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Joshua.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

THE LOOP

SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES
Birthday Bash
Sun, Apr 12 @ 12:15-2p — **Oasis Room**
Single parent families are celebrating parents and children with April birthdays! A complimentary lunch is provided and gift cards are given to everyone with a birthday this month. The party is free and no RSVP is required!
CONTACT Amber.Willet@HoustonsFirst.org

MEN
Men: Serve
Sat, Apr 25 @ 8a-1p — **The Loop**
Men will gather at The Loop then head out in teams to serve the widows of our church around the city. Through yard work, home repairs, car maintenance, and other tasks, there is a place for you to serve! Register by Fri, Apr 17, at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Emily.Brown@HoustonsFirst.org

CYPRESS

Baptism Sunday
Sun, Apr 26
Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change—a symbol to others of your new life in Christ. If you are interested in being baptized and sharing your story with the Cypress Campus family, contact Ian Brou about taking the next step.
CONTACT Ian.Brou@HoustonsFirst.org

DOWNTOWN

The Story of God Through Chinese Writing
Mon, Apr 6 @ 7-9p — **Vine Street Studios**
Many biblical stories are found in the tiny drawings and strokes that make up Chinese characters. Teacher Lee Hsia will help you appreciate the biblical origins of the Chinese language and share the Gospel with Chinese friends. Class meets at Vine Street Studios, 1113 Vine St., Ste 117.
CONTACT Peter.Lee@HoustonsFirst.org

SIENNA

It Starts at Home
Begins Wed, Apr 8 @ 6:30-8p — **4309 Sienna Parkway**
In this six-session Bible study on Wednesday evenings, parents will learn how to build a legacy of faith for their children. Register for childcare at HoustonsFirst.org/Sienna.
CONTACT Jordan.Floro@HoustonsFirst.org

SPANISH

Launch Sunday
Sun, Apr 12 @ 5p — **The Loop (Oasis Rm)**
Our Spanish Campus officially launches next week with a worship service at 5p followed by dinner. Life Bible Studies begin at 6:30p on Apr 19. Learn more about the new campus and complete an interest survey at HoustonsFirst.org/Espanol.
CONTACT Cynthia.Carranza@HoustonsFirst.org

THE MINGLING OF SOULS

GOD'S DESIGN FOR LOVE, MARRIAGE, SEX & REDEMPTION

Fri, Apr 17 @ 7p — The Loop Campus
Live event with Matt Chandler
Tickets available at HoustonsFirst.org/Events

MILESTONES CLASSES

Milestones classes equip people in a particular stage of life, crisis, or in general spiritual growth. These upcoming free classes are offered at The Loop Campus on Wednesdays from 6:30-8p. Visit HoustonsFirst.org/Events to learn more.

- Dealing with Entitlement and a Lack of Respect (Apr 29)
- Student Perspectives: Setting Boundaries (Apr 29)
- Questioning Evangelism (May 6 & 13)
- Matthew Bible Study: The Great Commission (May 6 & 13)
- Understanding Gender Confusion In Males (May 6)
- Understanding Gender Confusion In Females (May 13)



Celebration

Dec 10-13 — The Loop Campus
Tickets available Sat, Oct 17.
Celebrate Christmas at this spectacular musical experience provided by the Worship Ministry of Houston's First!



HE IS RISEN!

EASTER SUNDAY AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

APR 5, 2015

SUNDAYS AT HOUSTON'S FIRST					
The Loop Campus		Cypress Campus		Downtown Campus	
7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024		10300 Warner Smith Blvd • Cypress, TX 77433		1200 Louisiana St • Houston, TX 77002	
Worship 9:15a • 11a • 5p		Worship 11a		Worship 11a	
Life Bible Studies 8a • 9:15a • 10:45a • 6:30p		Life Bible Studies 9:30a		Life Bible Studies 9:30a	
Sienna Campus		Spanish Campus			
4309 Sienna Pkwy • Missouri City, TX 77459		7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024			
Worship 9:30a • 11a		Worship 5p			
Life Bible Studies 9:30a • 11a		Life Bible Studies 6:30p			



POINTS OF IMPACT

To know Houston's First is to know the hearts of the people who have made it their church home. These stories from each of our campuses provide a glimpse of what it means to be part of a relevant biblical community. We invite you to make Houston's First your home and discover your role in God's great story!



SPANISH CAMPUS HEART LANGUAGE

...I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. ...and they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!" — Revelation 7:9-10

Houston's First will feel a little more like heaven beginning next week as the Spanish Campus officially opens its doors. For Campus Pastor Juan Alaniz, it is a call from God that brings him back to his Texas roots. The road he has traveled since leaving the Lone Star State at age nine laid a foundation for reaching bilingual and Spanish-only speakers for Christ. The Spanish Campus features worship in Spanish and the sermon in English, delivered by Pastor Gregg Matte on the big screen with Spanish audio translation services available.

"I believe God is using the boundaries and walls I built in my own life in California to bridge cultural, generational and language barriers-to-worship in the lives of Houston-area Hispanics," said Pastor Juan.

His childhood move to California's Central Valley closed a chapter in his life as he tried to "fit in" to the Anglo world. Juan played basketball, and ongoing relationships with English-speaking teammates left him speaking only English—even at home—much to his parents' and older siblings' dismay. Soon, Juan had forgotten his heart language.

Juan attended Cal State University, where he met his wife Josie, born in Mexico to a Japanese father and Mexican mother. Josie earned two degrees and is an instructional coach for intermediate and high school teachers as well as a college professor.

Juan's love for basketball translated into a career coaching boys' high school varsity basketball while finishing his master's degree in Counseling Psychology. He continued coaching while counseling at DeAnza Community College. But God had a plan that would eventually take him out of academia, into God's service and on a quest to rediscover the language of his birth. With intense tutoring from Josie, Juan became fluent in Spanish



once again. He bought a bilingual Bible and prayed that God would allow him again to think in Spanish.

Juan received the call in 2006 to pastor a Spanish-speaking service at Big Valley Grace Community Church in Modesto. "It had taken nine years to relearn Spanish," he said. "It took three years to get comfortable speaking it in front of people."

Reclaiming his heart language served to repair the relationship between Juan and his family, broken after he walked away from his culture. "My father and I have become closer after I learned Spanish," he said. "I fell in love with my roots and I fell more in love with the Lord."

In 2013, Juan began a Spanish service at Calvary Baptist in Turlock, and in 2014, joined the staff of Houston's First following daughter Quimi, who has been serving as Student Ministry Worship Leader. Pastor Juan and his team are laying the groundwork for launching the Spanish Campus. Quimi and her sister Sami, a worship leader in California, will join their dad and a team of others in leading worship at the Spanish Campus.

"We pray for a unifying presence of the Lord in worship," said Pastor Juan, "to bridge any language barrier so families from all backgrounds can worship the Lord together under one roof."

ABOUT THE SPANISH CAMPUS

Launches Sun, Apr 12 • Oasis Room at The Loop Campus (7401 Katy Freeway)

Worship @ 5p • Life Bible Studies @ 6:30p (begin Sun, Apr 19)

[f](#) [HoustonFirstEspanol](#) [t](#) [@HFBCespanol](#)

THE LOOP CAMPUS CLAYTON'S LEGACY

"Going to church should not be hard," said Denise Briley, Special Needs Ministry Director at Houston's First (see photo, far left). Denise joined the staff in 2011 and, with other praying parents, started Thru the Roof Ministry, a state-of-the-art ministry for medically fragile children and adults, and those with autism, Asperger syndrome and a host of physical and emotional disabilities. All are warmly welcomed, loved and taught God's Word while parents and caregivers have the freedom to attend their own classes or serve in ministry, as God leads.

Denise recalls the rejection she felt when taking her firstborn, Clayton, then 11 years old, to visit a church after relocating from Louisiana to Texas for her husband Thad's job. It was her second visit—and Clayton's first—to the church that had welcomed her and their other two children with open arms the week before. "I know that although he could not speak it, he felt the unwelcoming spirit," said Denise.

Clayton had contracted a virus while in utero that caused him to become more medically fragile with each passing year. His long-term prognosis was poor, but Denise was determined that Clayton live a "normal" life, which included church attendance.

On their second attempt to find a church home, the Brileys found a congregation with willing, loving hearts who extended the hand of fellowship and pledged to learn how to serve Clayton so he and his family could attend.

Denise joined the choir and taught the Bible, but ultimately God led her to start JOY, a class for children with special needs. Families found acceptance and freedom as children learned each week that Jesus loved them. Ultimately, Denise joined the church staff as director of special education, where she worked for 16 years as the JOY class continued to grow and gain a sterling reputation in the community. Along the way, Clayton and his mom had become missionaries and advocates for children with special needs and their parents.

"Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." — John 12:24

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS SPREADING THE LOVE

The community of believers at the Downtown Campus reflects the diversity of its surroundings. With more than 30 countries represented, members come from all walks of life: college students, homeless and business people, artists and medical professionals. All gather each week to worship and serve surrounded by high-rise condominiums, office buildings, restaurants and theaters. Members are finding opportunities to reach out to those around them as as diverse as the people whose lives they touch.

After the success of last year's commitment of stocking and bagging on Tuesday nights at the Houston Food Bank, a group from the Married Young Adult Life Bible Study decided recently to join hands with Star of Hope Transitional Living Center (TLC). Once each month, class members bring goodies for 'Snacks & Goodnight,' where women and their children living at the TLC gather for a bedtime snack and to mingle with the Downtown Campus volunteers before turning in for the night.

"Adults at the TLC are trying to change their lives," said Stephanie Strother, a Life Bible Study member and volunteer. "The women are getting job training in an effort to provide for their children. We are happy to be involved with Star of Hope—knowing families are transitioning to a better life."



As the death of a beloved child would surely do, Denise felt lost and confused and she feared her enthusiasm for ministry might never return when Clayton passed away in 2009. For 25 years Clayton had been her focus. She wondered where God would lead her.

Denise found healing and rediscovered purpose in her ministry, and anyone who visits Thru the Roof in the new custom-designed Special Needs Suite will understand the depth of her devotion. More than 120 volunteers—parents and church members from every walk of life—are available to greet and to mentor members on Sundays, Wednesday evenings and at most special events. Denise set up a "Buddy" program where fourth grade through high school students volunteer as guides for each child. Thru the Roof also connects families and provides information on classes, support groups and other needs relevant to the special needs community.

"We've got great people who love these kids," said Denise. "We're making a place for them at the King's table."

SUNDAYS AT THE LOOP CAMPUS

7401 Katy Freeway

Worship @ 9:15a, 11a & 5p • Life Bible Studies @ 8a, 9:15a, 10:45a & 6:30p

[f](#) [HoustonFirst](#) [t](#) [@HoustonFirst](#) [i](#) [@HoustonFirst](#)



(The next event is Fri, Apr 24 @ 7-9p with live music provided by Sam Jones and Michael Brady from Houston's First.) Talking face-to-face has become a lost art in our hurry-up and digital world, so being intentional about these conversations is making a difference.

"We began hosting 'Night at Minuti' as a casual way for members to get to know downtown residents in a relaxed setting," said Stephanie. "It's one more opportunity for downtown residents and guests to hear about Jesus Christ and the Downtown Campus of Houston's First."

SUNDAYS AT THE DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

Hyatt Regency Houston — 1200 Louisiana Street

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

[f](#) [HFBCDowntown](#) [t](#) [@HFBCDowntown](#)

CYPRESS CAMPUS TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS

No church building for Vacation Bible School, but a desire to reach unchurched families led Cypress Campus Director of Preschool & Children's Ministry Erin Ruddle to develop a strategy for connecting church members with their neighbors and neighborhood kids with the Gospel.

"I wondered how we could reach families with children without having VBS," said Erin. "What if we streamlined VBS and equipped our members to make a name for Jesus on the streets where they live?"

Campus Pastor Jason Swiggart and a group of church members caught Erin's vision and two summers ago Backyard Kids' Club (BYKC) took root in seven members' Cypress-area homes. Last year, more than 100 adults and 265 children participated in 14 sites during the month of July. One group even held BYKC at a local park where passersby joined in.

"It's about building relationships with our neighbors," said Erin, "When they have a need they will remember, 'You're the neighbor who loves Jesus and spent time with my kid for a week.'"

Erin came up with a 'how-to' guide, curriculum and supplies for teaching teams of 6-12 people each. They were given the flexibility to hold BYKC any week in July and anytime during day or evening. Nearly every club held in the evening had dads helping out.

All generations—from young parents to great-grandparents—pitched in to help in every area: worship, Bible study, recreation, crafts and snacks. A Life Bible Study at the Cypress Campus hosted six sites last year.

"You don't have to be a pastor to pastor," said Erin. "About 60 percent of the families who brought their children to BYKC had no church home. There were several opportunities



for team members to talk with parents who stayed around while their child attended the club."

Julio and Richelle Hernandez were not members of a church when they heard about BYKC. They had been waiting to find a church that would reach out to the community in an intentional way. The Hernandez family began attending the Cypress Campus and became a BYKC host home.

"Back Yard Kids' Club gave us the opportunity to meet and share Christ with some of the kids that live in our neighborhood," said Richelle. "Our family has lots of great memories from BYKC—including our own daughter deciding to make Jesus her Lord and Savior!"

SUNDAYS AT THE CYPRESS CAMPUS

Smith Middle School — 10300 Warner Smith Blvd @ Fry Rd

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

[f](#) [HoustonFirstCypress](#) [t](#) [@HFBCcypress](#)

SIENNA CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION WITHIN

Fulfilling God's call to "visit the prisoner," members at the Sienna Campus are building relationships with men at the maximum-security Darrington Unit in Brazoria County. Initially through the annual A Day with Dad program, church members partnered with other churches to build bridges between children and their incarcerated fathers. That single event has opened the door for our Sienna family to become mentors with Malachi Dads, a weekly, year-long curriculum in the prison focusing on parenting, forgiveness and reconciliation. Not only are the men making a positive impact on the future of their own children, they are being trained to share Malachi Dads with other prisoners throughout the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

More than 70 percent of children with an incarcerated parent are destined themselves to end up in prison. Therefore, mentors prepare fathers in advance for A Day with Dad so they can learn how to relate to their children, many whom they have rarely—or never—seen. Preparation time for prisoners begins with fellowship with outside pastors and laypeople that teach them to bless and praise their children. When the day arrives, children are brought into the Unit to be reunited with their dads where they play games, make crafts, eat lunch and have quiet time to talk.

Walter Hutchins, 14 years on active duty with the Coast Guard and a member at the Sienna Campus, has become a regular volunteer in prison ministry after seeing the aftermath of A Day with Dad. As he meets weekly with a small group of men at the Darrington Unit, he



hears stories that confirm his time is well spent. "One man told us he hadn't heard from his son in 18 years," said Walter. "He learned that day that he had a grandchild."

Small groups like Walter's are preparing men's hearts for future leadership roles in ministry. Southwestern

Baptist Theological Seminary began an extension program at Darrington in 2011 and is set to graduate its first class in May this year. Inmates in the seminary are eligible to participate in Malachi Dads and after graduation will move on to other Texas prisons to act as Field Ministers on the Chaplaincy staff. Seminary graduates then work with outside volunteers to share firsthand insight into the Malachi Dads program in the prison where they are assigned.

"One man transferred to another unit, but didn't leave without first writing a two-page letter to his small group to encourage them in the faith. I wasn't expecting the kind of transparency I heard," said Walter. "There is real change happening in their lives."

SUNDAYS AT THE SIENNA CAMPUS

4309 Sienna Parkway

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

[f](#) [HoustonFirstSienna](#) [t](#) [@HFBCSienna](#)