

Generosity

AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

LIVING SIMPLY, LOVING DEEPLY

A member at the Downtown Campus is finding greater freedom and purpose in life, career and ministry as she gives God permission to call the shots.

The grass hut, a “Bahay Kubo,” her grandparents once called home is far removed from the lifestyle Marianne Dublado enjoyed after moving to the United States from the Philippines as a seven-year-old. Each trip back home over the years and her growing relationship with Christ began to change Marianne’s perspective on trusting God, living simply on purpose — and giving faithfully.

“God has been shaping my heart,” said Marianne, of life since becoming a believer in 2007. Marianne was baptized in 2011 at The Loop Campus and later began attending the Downtown Campus, where she feels a great sense of community and accountability.

“I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content — whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.”
Philippians 4:12

The first day she heard Pastor Gregg speak about MISSION 1:8, the two-year Houston’s First generosity initiative that began in 2013, the Lord challenged her to give, but she found it difficult to give above a tithe. One problem — forgetfulness. She decided one way to remain faithful was to schedule her giving online. “I don’t have to think about being consistent in my giving,” she said. “As I began to realize the money isn’t mine, but the Lord’s, I noticed He was breaking the chains of greediness in my heart.”



As Marianne began releasing her own preferences to the Lord in sheer acts of obedience, she began to see even greater purpose and ministry in her career as a social worker counseling patients in a Houston area HIV clinic. “Patients with HIV weren’t necessarily a population I was passionate about initially,” said Marianne, but God continues to confirm her call to minister to them.

When an opportunity arose to go on a mission trip to Africa, she hoped to go to Sudan, but God had another destination in mind. Instead, He purposed her to go to Kenya, the country with the fourth largest HIV epidemic in the world. There she interacted with orphaned children with AIDS whose parents had succumbed to the disease.

Marianne thinks back to the choices she has had and the way God has guided her life as she handed control over her life and finances to Him. She listens closely as He guides her in knowing whom to help and when. It’s freedom in giving and being obedient that doesn’t produce a feeling of deprivation, but of great satisfaction and fulfillment of God’s purpose in her life. “That’s how God works,” said Marianne. “Giving is really an opportunity to love.”

WHAT IS YOUR GENEROSITY STORY?

Share it at HoustonsFirst.org/MyStory.

MINISTRY IMPACT YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS FROM JAN 1 TO MAY 31, 2015

DECISIONS

512 New Church Members
89 Joined By Baptisms



ATTENDANCE

100,348 in Life Bible Studies
(4,778 weekly average)

123,382 in Worship Services
(5,608 weekly average)

12,438 on Webcast
(565 weekly average)

MISSIONS

13 Mission Trips with
175 Team Members



GENEROSITY

4,640 Givers to Great Commission Giving
936 were First-Time Givers



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: “Thank you @HoustonsFirst for watching our Birdie so @eholmes45 & I could have a much needed date night! #recreatedatnight #dateyourspouse” — @ThatAlanaHolmes

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

The Steps of Paul & the Beginning of the Church Today @ 2-4p — The Loop (Connection Center)

Join Cypress Campus Pastor Jason Swiggart, his wife Paige, and Wanda Jean Hickey for a tour of Italy this Sep 7-14. Learn more at this interest meeting and at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Jason.Swiggart@HoustonsFirst.org

SINGLES/COLLEGE/MARRIED

MetroLIVE

Thursdays @ 7:13p — The Loop (Worship Center)

People in their 20s/30s from across Houston will gather this summer for Bible teaching and worship. This week, Adam Tarnow teaches with worship led by the Jeff Johnson Band. Visit MetroLIVE.org to see what’s ahead!
CONTACT Joshua.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

SINGLE ADULTS 40+

Astros Game - MercyMe Concert

Sat, Jun 13 @ 1:30p — The Loop (Fellowship Center)

Enjoy fajitas with the Single Adults 40+ ministry, then carpool to the Astros game (3:10p) followed by a MercyMe concert. Get your tickets (including lunch, game, and concert) at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Chris.Heitman@HoustonsFirst.org

THE LOOP

SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

Birthday Bash

Sun, Jun 14 @ 12:15-1:30p — Oasis Room

Single parent families will celebrate parents and children with June birthdays. We provide a complimentary lunch and gift cards to everyone who has a birthday this month! The party is free and no RSVP is required.
CONTACT Amber.Willet@HoustonsFirst.org

Father's Day Luncheon

Sun, Jun 21 @ 12:15p — Fellowship Center

Dads — let us celebrate YOU! Enjoy lunch with your kids then see the cards they made and the gifts they picked just for you. Eric Reed, Minister to Men, will speak and Ryan Langford will lead worship. RSVP at HoustonsFirst.org/Events. (Single moms are invited, too!)
CONTACT Holly.Crain@HoustonsFirst.org

ADULTS 60+

Old Time Country at Hunt Retreat

Fri, Jun 19 @ 10a-2p — Hunt Retreat

Spend a summer day with horseshoes, barbecue, watermelon, and to top it off, special cowboy country singer, Wess Adams! Ride the bus from The Loop (limited seating) or drive on your own. Cost is \$20, lunch included. Register by calling 713.957.7661 or at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Tracie.Bowman@HoustonFirst.org

WOMEN

Simple Summer

Wednesdays, Jun 10, 17, & 24 @ 6:30-8p — Rm 249

Women are invited to a simple summer of Bible studies focusing on Simple Grace, led by Andrea Kim; Simple Submission, led by Courtney Gilmore; and Simple Love, led by Shannon Bloodworth. Childcare available with registration at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Haylee.Nelson@HoustonsFirst.org

MEN

Men: Serve

Sat, Jun 27 @ 8a-1p — Fitness & Rec Ctr Parking Lot

Men will gather at The Loop then head out in teams to serve the widows of our church family around the city. Through yard work, home repairs, car maintenance, and other tasks, there is a place for you to serve! Register by Fri, Jun 12, at HoustonsFirst.org/Events.
CONTACT Emily.Brown@HoustonsFirst.org

CYPRESS

Family Worship Day

Sun, Jun 14 @ 10a — Tin Hall

Gather with the Cypress Campus family for a family-style worship day and picnic lunch. Worship will start at 10a, followed by lunch at 11a. Bring your favorite side dish or dessert and your lawn chair. Water activities are available for the kids. Tin Hall is located at 14800 Tin Hall Rd, Cypress, TX 77429.
CONTACT Dana.Haddad@HoustonsFirst.org

WOMEN

Simple Summer

Tuesdays, June 9, 16, & 23 @ 9:30-11:30a

Cypress Ministry Center

Women are invited to a simple summer of Bible studies focusing on Simple Grace, led by Jasie Boyd; Simple Submission, led by Donna Ross; and Simple Love, led by Teal Moran. Childcare available with registration at HoustonsFirst.org/Cypress.
CONTACT Andi.Farrell@HoustonsFirst.org

DOWNTOWN

WOMEN

Fruit of the Holy Spirit: Part 2

Every Mon thru Jun 29 @ 7-8:30p — Vine St Studios

Join the ladies of the Downtown Campus as we complete our study, *Fruit of the Holy Spirit*. We will explore kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Register at HoustonsFirst.org/Downtown. (Vine Street Studios are located at 1113 Vine Street, Ste. 117, 77002).
CONTACT Carly.OConnor@HoustonsFirst.org

SIENNA

Astros' Faith and Family Night

Sat, Jun 13 @ 3:10p — Minute Maid Park

The Sienna Campus family is going out to the ballgame to watch the Astros play the Mariners, followed by a MercyMe concert. Purchase tickets for Club Level seating (\$42 each with \$15 voucher) at HoustonsFirst.org/Sienna. Offer ends Sat, Jun 13 @ 12p.
CONTACT Jordan.Floro@HoustonsFirst.org

SPANISH

Family Night

Tue, Jun 9 @ 6:30-8:30p — Harbor Room

Gather with the Spanish Campus family for a night of fellowship! We'll have food, games, bowling and much more. We look forward to seeing you there! No RSVP required.
CONTACT Karina.Bazaldua@HoustonsFirst.org

SUMMER SPEAKERS

While Pastor Gregg is on sabbatical, the Sunday message will be given by Campus Pastors, staff members, and these guest speakers. Visit HoustonsFirst.org for the schedule at your campus.

Jun 14

Matthew Hoskinson

First Baptist Church in the City of New York

Jun 21

Lee Strobel

Author of *The Case for Christ*

Jun 28

Thom Rainer

President and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources

Jul 5

Nabeel Qureshi

Author of *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*

LIFE BIBLE STUDIES

Life Bible Studies are the primary method for connecting with others and growing together at Houston's First. Visit HoustonsFirst.org to find one that's right for you, or ask the Welcome Team at your campus for assistance.



Be a missionary to our city! Houston 1:8 takes place in the evenings during the week of July 6 at locations around Houston. Visit HoustonsFirst.org/Houston18 to discover what your campus is doing this summer to share the love and truth of Jesus with our neighbors. While there, sign up to join this churchwide mission trip!
CONTACT Jonathan.Huegel@HoustonsFirst.org



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Jun 29-Jul 2 @ 9a-12:30p — The Loop

For kids entering K-6th grade (plus kids born Sep-Dec 2010)

New in 2015:

- Bible Study for moms each day
- Family Night on Wed, Jul 1

Details, volunteer, and registration at HoustonsFirst.org/Events

SUNDAYS AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

The Loop Campus

7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024

Worship 9:15a-11a-5p

Life Bible Studies 8a-9:15a-10:45a-6:30p

Cypress Campus

10300 Warner Smith Blvd • Cypress, TX 77433

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

Downtown Campus

1200 Louisiana St • Houston, TX 77002

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

Sienna Campus

4309 Sienna Pkwy • Missouri City, TX 77459

Worship 9:30a-11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a-11a

Spanish Campus

7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024

Worship 5p

Life Bible Studies 6:30p



HOUSTON'S FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH
PASTOR GREGG MATTE

COMING FULL CIRCLE



MORE STORIES:

JUST LIKE ME

CREATED FOR GOOD WORKS
LIVING SIMPLY, LOVING DEEPLY

JUN 7, 2015

TELLING HIS STORY BY SHARING YOURS

God uses imperfect people to share their own stories of hope with a hopeless world. As you read these accounts of God’s movement among the Houston’s First family, consider your own “God story.” Ask Him to bring to mind the ways He has revealed Himself in your life — and share your story.



PASS IT ON!

Stories are meant to be told. Visit HoustonsFirst.org/MyStory to share these stories via social media or email.

COMING FULL CIRCLE

From sleeping on a mattress on the floor as a child to growing up to become an engineer, God uses life’s ups and downs to help us see — and meet — the needs of others.

Sleeping on a mattress on the floor hoping the cockroaches wouldn’t climb in bed with her — that’s what Karina Bazaldua remembers about the summer before sixth grade. The apartment Karina shared with her parents in 1996 after emigrating from Mexico City to Arlington, Texas, wasn’t much, but thanks to Mission Arlington, a mission of First Baptist Arlington, they had food, beds, dishes, clothing and other items to set up a home in a new country. The impact the ministry had on her family would forever stay in Karina’s heart, laying the early groundwork for ministry with her husband Victor at the Faith Center of Houston’s First.

“Our family was starting from scratch when we came to the United States,” recalls Karina. “Food, clothes, couches, plates — just about everything we needed — Mission Arlington provided.” The situation many Houstonians find themselves in is not so very different from that of Karina’s family. The support they received early on supplemented her father’s manufacturing job, which eventually helped Karina to attend college.

Karina met Victor while studying Engineering at UT-Arlington. She went on to obtain her Master’s degree in Engineering at Texas A&M. Karina received a job offer in Houston in 2009, and soon the newly-engaged couple began seeking out a “relevant” church home. They joined Houston’s First, were married in 2010, and quickly became Missions Coordinators for their Life Bible Study. Each month, class members ministered to families at Oak Forest Apartments, where the Faith Center sponsors a Saturday Kids’ Club, offers homework help to resident children on the weekdays and holds small group Bible study on Thursday nights.

Within a year, the couple was handpicked by Faith Center Director Scotty Sanders to be site leaders at the Faith Center for Houston 1:8, a yearly, home-based mission trip to our city sponsored by Houston’s First. “I have a note stuck on my computer that says ‘Be prepared, pure, productive,’” said Scotty. “It pretty much sums up Victor and Karina. They did an amazing job at the Faith Center. They know how to trust God, delegate and trust the volunteers, and be leaders.”



Victor and Karina served in the food pantry and clothes closet, the backbone of service at the Faith Center, which feeds and clothes more than 400 families every month. The couple has also been involved in teaching various classes offered at the Faith Center, including ESL classes, a computer ministry and counseling center.

The Faith Center is one of the largest ministry sites of Houston 1:8. Volunteers — or missionaries — from Houston’s First are sent to various ministry locations throughout Houston during the first full week of July. At the Faith Center, between 200-250 volunteers from the church serve food, teach Vacation Bible School, youth programs, men’s classes, women’s classes, a Spanish Bible study and more throughout the weeklong ministry event.

Both Karina and Victor have seen the Lord work in lives through neighborhood missions. As children, they were both recipients of God’s provision through the generosity of everyday people. The Bazalduas have pledged their lives to giving back. “We have a big heart for the Faith Center, for donating materially and giving of our time,” said Karina. “We come from communities like this. We are those kids.”

CREATED FOR GOOD WORKS

Single Millenials dared to fast and pray that they might make a difference in the lives of others, and God did extravagantly more than they could ask or imagine.

A year ago, Kendall Jenkins and her friends in 1:14, a young single adult Life Bible Study, began to fast and pray, hoping to see the Lord open doors that would allow them to significantly pour into the lives of others. All had responded to Pastor Gregg’s MISSION 1:8 call to generosity, but they were feeling led to do even more.

“I have been excited to give extravagantly beyond the tithe,” said Kendall. “But I was praying for a breakthrough on how I, a single girl with little resources, could make a BIG impact here in Houston and internationally in South Sudan.”

A couple of years ago Kendall participated in a 10-day mission trip to South Sudan and the idea to support the many needs there took root in her heart.

As she fasted and prayed, an idea to host an event was born. “It sounded crazy at the time,” said Kendall, “but I just continued to pray. I brought it up to my Bible study girls and they immediately jumped on board!”

The young women had no venue, no money, and very little free time. They knew, though, that when God gives a vision, He makes provision.

Soon, the vision had a name. The five girls would call it ‘Created.’

“We are each created with specific gifts and talents to glorify God,” said Kendall. “We are also created to know and make Him known.”

Their Life Bible Study got behind the project and one class member with a design background created a logo. Others created handmade goods to put in a silent auction, and an artist created a live painting to auction off at the event.

“God answered our prayers in miraculous ways,” said Kendall. “We were given a venue to use for free, a friend and his band agreed to play as entertainment for free, and local businesses gave us items for the auction — all free.” They prayed to raise \$10,000 during the event, which, to the girls seemed completely unattainable. “We quickly learned that our math is very different than God’s!” said Kendall.

More than 200 young professionals attended Created, and in just three hours raised \$30,000 through ticket sales and the silent auction. All the proceeds were used to introduce the love of Christ to the poor, exploited and marginalized.

Through Created, God became real to Sudanese children and their mothers who had to walk miles to get clean water in a war-torn country. The event completely funded a water well in Mvolo, South Sudan.

Back in Houston, innocent girls caught up in sex trafficking are now being housed and cared for by the donations from Created.

“We prayed boldly and trusted God,” said Kendall. “Just like Peter, we got out of the boat and looked to Jesus. I’m so glad we didn’t miss the opportunity to be part of a miracle.”



Kendall Jenkins (center) and members of 1:14 Life Bible Study class

JUST LIKE ME

A recently-baptized Houston’s First member came to Christ as a teen in a program for urban youth and has since dedicated his life to mentoring others like himself who have experienced homelessness.

The sun wouldn’t be up for hours, but with no other place to turn for help, 16-year old Douglas Roberts, his mom and two younger brothers — the youngest a toddler — emerged from a Houston Police Department squad car and made their way through a sea of sleeping homeless men to the Star of Hope Emergency Shelter.

“That memory stays with me after all these years. Those were rough days,” said Houston’s First member Douglas Roberts, now 38 and on the board of directors at Hope for Youth, an organization that spreads the gospel and gives a hand-up to urban youth, ages 11-19. Hope for Youth was founded in 1991 by Star of Hope (SOH) volunteer Wendy Dewlen, a six-year member of Houston’s First, SOH staff member Kim Hansen, and volunteers from Second Baptist Houston.



Douglas recalls that earlier that night his family had boarded a Metro bus for the shelter, but about halfway through their trip the buses stopped running. Alone on the streets of Houston with three children at 3:30 a.m., all Douglas’ mom could think to do was call the police. Asking for help wasn’t easy. She had cashed in her New York teacher retirement pension to relocate to

Houston after being offered a teaching position. When they arrived, however, the position had been given to someone else.

The family initially made their home in Alief, but after going to the Star of Hope Transitional Living Center (TLC), Douglas’ only option for finishing the semester at Hastings High School (20 miles away) was to catch the 3 a.m. Metro bus. His first stop was downtown to transfer to a second bus bound for the suburbs. He arrived at school each morning just after the tardy bell rang. “It embarrassed me to be late every day,” said Douglas. “But I had understanding teachers and administrators who helped and encouraged me. Some of them bought me bus passes.”

One Saturday morning at the TLC, Douglas opened his apartment door to Wendy, who had come to invite him to ‘Jesus N the ‘Hood,’ a Vacation Bible School-style program for older youth. “At first, I wasn’t too sure about it,” said Douglas, “but a friend said Wendy was OK, so I thought I’d try it.”

At Hope for Youth, Douglas learned what it meant to be a Christian. “Hope for Youth saved me,” said Douglas. “The Bible study introduced me to Christ. It also taught me about prayer and how to have patience with others.” Hope for Youth offers college prep and life skills programs that prepare youth for getting (and keeping) jobs. “It’s kind of like a Christian Big Brothers and Big Sisters,” said Douglas. “Since its beginning, each year anywhere from 200-500 youth have been connected with believing adult mentors. It makes all the difference in living a positive life.”

Douglas’ association with Hope for Youth led him first to become an intern, volunteering in the office while attending the University of Houston. He became a mentor and led the College Prep program after graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. Douglas went on to use his degree and analytical skills as a Webmaster and software developer. This year, he will rotate off the Hope for Youth Board of Directors after 10 years of service. Douglas’ desire is to continue to mentor kids who need help as he did more than 25 years ago.

“After a couple of months at the Star of Hope TLC my mom was able to move us to an apartment complex in Spring Branch,” said Douglas. “We made a fresh start.” He has never forgotten all he has been given — especially the chance to be introduced to Christ.

“Today, a lot of the kids we see are just like me,” said Douglas. “It’s important to volunteer and offer leadership to help them know Christ. I’ve had a lot of good people in my life. I want to be that for others.”

INTERESTED IN BEING A MENTOR?

Contact Skyler.Womack@HoustonsFirst.org on the Missions Team to learn about local ministries with current opportunities to serve.



Houston 1:8 registration is currently underway. Discover the various opportunities to serve and join the team at HoustonsFirst.org/Houston18.

How has God uniquely created you? Take the next step toward answering that question by completing a free spiritual gifts assessment provided by Houston’s First at HoustonsFirst.org/SpiritualGifts.

Learn more about Hope For Youth and how you can be a mentor to local students at HopeForYouth.org.