

# Generosity

AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

As 2015 comes to a close, consider your generosity to Houston's First as a way to support the ministries of our church and to share the Good News in our city, our nation, and our world.

## MAKING A YEAR-END CONTRIBUTION

FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO QUALIFY AS 2015 DONATIONS FOR TAX-DEDUCTION PURPOSES, THEY MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH AS FOLLOWS:

**IN PERSON** Bring contributions to the church's business office by 4:30p on Thu, Dec 31, 2015. The business office is located at The Loop Campus at 7401 Katy Freeway. Contributions can also be placed in the offering plate at any campus throughout December.

**BY MAIL** Contributions must be postmarked before Fri, Jan 1, 2016, and mailed to Houston's First Baptist Church, 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, Texas 77024.

**ONLINE** Submit contributions at [HoustonsFirst.org/Generosity](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Generosity) before midnight (Central) on Thu, Dec 31, 2015.

**MOBILE** Submit contributions on a mobile device before midnight (Central) on Thu, Dec 31, 2015. To make a mobile contribution, text your campus code to 77977 to receive a designated link — HFBCLoop, HFBC Cypress, HFBCDowntown, HFBCSienna, or HFBCSpanish.

Please contact Sara Johnson at 713.957.5806 or at [Sara.Johnson@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Sara.Johnson@HoustonsFirst.org) should you desire additional information about year-end giving.

### GIFTS OF STOCK

Since the church is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, gifts of stock qualify as a charitable contribution and are tax deductible. If you would like to donate a gift of stock, or desire additional information, please contact Amber Willet at 713.957.5807 or at [Amber.Willet@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Amber.Willet@HoustonsFirst.org).

### ESTATE PLANNING

Houston's First has partnered with PhilanthroCorp, a trusted estate planning firm, to help you put together an estate plan that accomplishes your goals. There is no cost to you for their assistance. Learn more about PhilanthroCorp and the services they provide at [HoustonsFirst.org/Generosity](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Generosity).



"THE SIZE OF THE BUDGET DOESN'T MATTER. IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING GOOD WITH BIG NUMBERS, BUT BEING EXCELLENT IN SMALL HABITS."

CORY AND SARAH MIZELL

"YOU CAN'T OUTGIVE GOD!"

LONNIE AND CONNIE HAMILTON



"THE MORE WE GIVE, IT SEEMS LIKE THE MORE OUR BLESSINGS MULTIPLY FOR US TO CONTINUE SHARING WITH OTHERS."

ROBBIE AND CONNIE SCHILHAB



"AS I BEGAN TO REALIZE THE MONEY IS THE LORD'S, I NOTICED HE WAS BREAKING THE CHAINS OF GREEDINESS IN MY HEART."

MARIANNE DUBLADO



"NOT THAT WE DON'T STRUGGLE AT TIMES — IT'S PART OF THE JOURNEY. GOD JUST TAKES CARE OF US."

CLIFF AND JENNIFER STOCKSTILL

## WHAT IS YOUR GENEROSITY STORY?

Share it at [HoustonsFirst.org/MyStory](http://HoustonsFirst.org/MyStory).

## MINISTRY IMPACT YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS FROM JAN 1 TO NOV 29, 2015

### DECISIONS

1,023 New Church Members  
186 Joined By Baptism

18% OF NEW MEMBERS  
WERE BAPTIZED

### ATTENDANCE

220,442 in Life Bible Studies  
(4,792 weekly average)  
262,566 in Worship Services  
(5,470 weekly average)  
29,579 on Webcast  
(616 weekly average)

### MISSIONS

33 Mission Trips with  
2,163 Team Members



### GENEROSITY

6,783 Givers to Great Commission Giving  
1,905 were First-Time Givers

28% OF GIVING WAS A  
FIRST TIME GIFT

## 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: "We have to remember all people have a soul and a story. @JerrellAltic @HoustonsFirst" — @ChambersChad

### ALL CAMPUSES

**HighPoint Bible Study**  
Wednesdays @ 11:30a — 1010 Lamar (Tunnel Level)  
This weekly downtown Bible study is open to everybody! This week, Pastor Gregg Matte will be teaching. Bring your lunch, or purchase one there for \$8. The lesson begins at 12:10p. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/HighPoint](http://HoustonsFirst.org/HighPoint) to learn more.  
**CONTACT** Diane.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

#### YOUNG SINGLES

**Summit New Years Eve**  
Thu, Dec 31 @ 9p-2a — Lucky Strike  
Strike gold at Summit NYE 2016! Whether you decide to eat, dance, sing, or play, we'll keep things rolling until the New Year comes! Don't miss this golden opportunity to ring in 2016 with other young singles. Online registration available through Wed, Dec 30, at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events).  
**CONTACT** Joshua.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

#### WOMEN

**The Table**  
Every Tue, Jan 19–Feb 23 @ 6:30–8p — The Loop  
Come experience the presence of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit as women from across Houston join together ready to embrace the hope and provision found through the Word. Teachers Kay Altic, Kelly Matte, and Star Smith will lead us as we 'dine' together and see how Jesus is MORE than enough!  
**CONTACT** Carolyn.O'Neal@HoustonsFirst.org

#### MEN

**Warrior's Heart**  
Every Thu thru Dec 10 @ 6:30-7:30a  
The Loop (Fellowship Ctr)  
In our *Great Men of Faith* series, we're looking at men who show faith in all types of situations. This is our last week to gather together for the semester, with Eric Reed teaching on Barnabas this Thursday. Breakfast is available for \$5. Registration at [HoustonsFirst.org/Men](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Men) is encouraged, but not required.  
**CONTACT** Emily.Brown@HoustonsFirst.org

### THE LOOP

**CanHope**  
Mon, Dec 14 @ 6:30-8p — The Loop (Garden Rm)  
CanHope ministers to families touched by cancer and those who love and care about them. We will share a meal together; an entree is provided, so please bring a salad, vegetable or dessert. Come enjoy this time of testimony, prayer, and fellowship! RSVP to 713.957.6764.  
**CONTACT** Sherry.Oradat@HoustonsFirst.org

#### NEXTGEN MINISTRIES

**Christmaspalooza**  
Today @ 12:30-4p — The Loop  
Celebrate Christmas HUB-style with Christmaspalooza! Students (6th-12th grades) will get lunch after the 11a worship service today, then have a blast with "big kid" inflatables, hot cocoa, fire pits, and more. It's not too late! Sign up in The HUB area today!  
**CONTACT** Tony.Bianco@HoustonsFirst.org

#### SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

**Birthday Bash**  
Today @ 12:45-1:30p — The Loop (Fellowship Ctr)  
Single parent families are getting together to celebrate parents and children with December 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

#### SINGLE ADULTS

**Impact's Celebration & Dinner**  
Sat, Dec 12 @ 5:30p — The Loop  
Gather with other single adults from Impact Ministries for dinner and a special evening at Celebration. We'll start dinner at 5:30p (Rm 401) and attend the 7p presentation of Celebration. Dinner and your Celebration ticket are \$22. We have a limited number of tickets, so register soon at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events).  
**CONTACT** Chris.Heitman@HoustonsFirst.org

### CYPRESS

**NEXTGEN MINISTRIES**  
**SURGE Christmas 2015**  
Wed, Dec 9 @ 6-8p — Cypress Ministry Center  
How many opportunities do you get to wear an ugly Christmas sweater? Well, here's your chance! SURGE student ministry will partner with 'Christmas at the Mansions' gift initiative this year. Wear your sweater and wrap gifts to be given to the kids at the Mansions.  
**CONTACT** Danna.Chapman@HoustonsFirst.org

### DOWNTOWN

**NEXTGEN MINISTRIES**  
**First Friends: Parents' Afternoon Out**  
Sat, Dec 19 @ 11a-1p — 1010 Lamar  
The holidays are nearly here, and wouldn't an afternoon of uninterrupted shopping be grand? Drop off the kids, shop, run errands or have a coffee date with your spouse. Let First Friends care for your kiddos (birth through Kindergarten) for the afternoon, and lunch is provided! Register by Mon, Dec 14, at [HoustonsFirst.org/Downtown](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Downtown).  
**CONTACT** Kristin.Fowles@HoustonsFirst.org

### SIENNA

**Second Mile Toy Drive**  
Sun, Dec 13  
The Sienna Campus is partnering with Second Mile Mission Center to provide gifts for children in Fort Bend County. Bring a new, unwrapped gift for children up to 12 years old on Sunday, Dec 13. Visit [SecondMile.org](http://SecondMile.org) for more information about the mission center.  
**CONTACT** Jordan.Floro@HoustonsFirst.org

### POINSETTIAS

Help decorate our campuses this Christmas season by donating a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/Christmas](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Christmas) to make your \$12 donation, or use a designated envelope available at CornerBooks and at each campus.

#### NEXTGEN MINISTRIES

**Christmaspalooza**  
Today @ 12:30-4p  
The HUB Sienna students (6th-12th grades) will celebrate Christmas this afternoon around the town! Starting with a white elephant gift exchange during our Life Bible Study, then going to three mystery destinations immediately following the 11a worship service. It's not too late to join the fun, so talk to Jordan today!  
**CONTACT** Jordan.Floro@HoustonsFirst.org

### SPANISH

**Worship & Life Bible Studies**  
Sundays @ 5p & 6:30p - Oasis Room  
Due to Celebration, the Spanish Campus will not meet next week, Sun, Dec 13. On Sun, Dec 20, we invite you to come worship with us in Spanish and hear Pastor Gregg's message in Spanish or English! After the service, join us in a Life Bible Study — Seguridad en Cristo, Creciendo en la Vida Cristiana and Las Verdades De La Salvación.  
**CONTACT** Karina.Bazaldua@HoustonsFirst.org

## Christmas Eve

### CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

Plan to gather with the Houston's First family for candlelight services on Christmas Eve. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/Christmas](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Christmas) for details about the following options:

**The Loop** @ 2p, 4p, & 6p — 7401 Katy Fwy (Worship Ctr)

**Cypress** @ 4p & 6p — Tin Hall (14800 Tin Hall Rd)

**Sienna** @ 4p & 6p — 4309 Sienna Parkway

**Spanish** @ 2p, 4p, & 6p — Gathering with The Loop

The Downtown Campus family and guests will come together to give life away serving at Open Door Mission.

### 2016 DEVOTIONAL

Pastor Gregg recommends the *Once-A-Day Walk with Jesus Devotional* for our church family to use in 2016. The 365 daily entries allow you to read through the New Testament in one year. Each day includes a Scripture portion, insight from a Christian writer of the past, and a personal application and worship portion. The devotional is available from CornerBooks for \$15.

### LIFE BIBLE STUDIES

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

HOUSTON'S FIRST  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
PASTOR GREGG MATTE

# Handmade HOPE



### MORE STORIES:

LOUD AND CLEAR  
KNIT TOGETHER WITH LOVE  
YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS

DEC 6, 2015

### 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 9:30a-11a  
Life Bible Studies 9:30a-11a

**Downtown Campus**  
1010 Lamar • 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



# A TIME TO SOW

Christmas is a time of year that offers believers opportunities to share the message of Christ more naturally than in any other season. The gifts we give, the stories we tell and the songs we sing are seeds of hope planted in loamy ground. In this issue of the Weekly Guide, we focus on Houston's First members who are using gifts of creativity and hearts of compassion to share the Gospel with those who can't read, with those who can't hear and with those of little means.



## PASS IT ON!

Stories are meant to be told. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/MyStory](http://HoustonsFirst.org/MyStory) to share these stories via social media or email.

## HANDMADE HOPE

**At Houston's First, being a difference maker is not limited to adults. Children are also making a difference in our city, our nation, and our world. This holiday season, the Children's Ministry from each campus is opening the Gospel to non-readers, handing out hope through creativity and enterprise.**

It's a story seldom heard over the airwaves: Preteens giving 60-70 hours of their time in one month to change lives across an entire nation. Creative sisters Macie, 11, and Alex Gunn, 9, members of First Kids at the Cypress Campus of Houston's First, found a way to share the Good News with people on the other side of the world while spreading a little Christmas cheer close to home.



Each Sunday and Wednesday during the month of October, the Children's Ministry at all campuses took up an offering for Every Village, a ministry partner that gives free solar powered radios to residents in villages throughout South Sudan. The initiative, Radio 10, broadcasts God's Word, news, community development education, and other essential information that reaches approximately 15 villagers for every radio distributed.

"Here, we have Bibles in our homes so we can learn the Word of God," said Kristina Gunn, the girls' mother, "but most people in South Sudan villages can't read. The girls made Christmas ornaments and gift tags to raise money for radios so villagers can hear the Gospel in their own language."

The literacy rate in South Sudan is less than 30 percent, which makes radios an excellent information tool for village residents. The goal for Every Village's Radio 10 ministry this year is to distribute 7,500 handheld radios, which could have an impact on tens of thousands in South Sudan.

"We're so proud of the girls," said Kristina. "What are we going to do this year?" was their question when they began mulling over ideas to earn money for radios. The girls were the catalyst behind the project."



The girls began crafting in October, giving up TV time and other activities so they could concentrate on creating this year's project. The girls sold handmade bracelets last year for the cause, buying 18 radios after setting an initial target of nine. This

"I feel like I'm doing something good," said Macie. Alex agrees. "It does feel good to share the Gospel with the help of family and friends," she said.

year, they brainstormed with their mom, dad, John Gunn, IT director at Houston's First, and older sister, Madison. They landed on the idea of creating ornaments, a sentimental holiday favorite, from special clay. They rolled out, baked and embossed them with intricate designs, many that included the current year and the ministry name, Every Village.

Macie and Alex produced more than 400 of the beautiful Christmas ornaments and a wide assortment of handmade gift tags that will adorn trees and presents in many Cypress-area homes, and beyond, this season. Through word-of-mouth advertising, the items sold like wildfire — not only in Houston, but also to out-of-town relatives who, in turn, gave them to friends and neighbors. By the end of October, the girls had donated \$1,000, which purchased 50 radios for the South Sudanese, far exceeding last year's goal.

"The way their faces lit up when they found they had earned a radio!" said Kristina. "They both have a missionary spirit."

Love for missions is foundational at Houston's First. With 20 mission trips set for 2016, children and adults alike are being disciplined to spread the Gospel in many different ways and in different settings around the world, from the Middle East to San Francisco's Bay Area. There are many ways to participate in missions, and as Macie and Alex have shown, they are making a difference in the lives of South Sudanese while working in the comfort of their own kitchen.

"The girls worked hard," said John, "and providing radios to Every Village allows the girls to see that every dollar they raise makes a tangible impact on people hearing the Gospel."

# LOUD AND CLEAR

**More than 90 years ago, Houston's oldest Deaf church took root inside the walls of Houston's First. Its members moved to Woodhaven Baptist Church in the 1980s, and it became the first and only Deaf church in the Houston area with its own facility and still is today. Now, difference makers like Woodhaven member Kathy Adegboye continue to break down walls of silence for the Deaf in the name of Christ.**

Spinal meningitis silenced Kathy Glasco's world when she was seven years old. Fingerspelling was her only means of communicating until she learned American Sign Language (ASL) at age 12 while living at the Texas School for the Deaf. Once she learned to sign, Kathy has been a force — bridging the communication gap between the Hearing and Deaf communities and advocating for the hearing impaired by locating jobs and other necessary resources to improve their lives. Now, as a seven-year member at Woodhaven Baptist Deaf Church, Kathy Adegboye, along with her husband Kunle, are active in ministry to spread the Gospel and the love of Christ in a language few can understand.

"Kathy makes a difference in the lives of many as a witness for Christ," said Arthur Craig, pastor of Woodhaven Baptist Deaf Church since 1983. "She is very active in the Deaf community and is highly respected in the church and community."

Employed as an advocate by the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Kathy assists her Deaf clients in finding employment and educational opportunities; gaining access to medical services and devices; and sharing strategies to help them reach their personal and professional goals.

Kunle and Kathy, married just over a year ago, are Tactile Interpreters for deaf and blind members, communicating by signing in the palms of their hands. Kathy also presides over the Woodhaven Women's Ministry, is a music and ASL worship interpreter and singer, and an active prayer team member.

In addition to her regular commitments, Kathy wrote the script and is directing this year's Woodhaven Christmas drama, "Hope, Faith & Giving." The production features Deaf actors, is performed in ASL and voiced for the Hearing in three performances at Woodhaven on the second weekend of December.

If excitement about this year's Christmas production is running at an all-time high, it may be because of the recent \$1 million renovation of Woodhaven's Worship Center, made possible in part by funds from the Houston's First family. The makeover was unveiled at a special service on November 15 and includes a floating floor and state-of-the-art sound system that allows Deaf congregants to "feel" sound. Special lighting and three Image Magnification screens supports optimal viewing for ASL signing during worship services.

"The Deaf are one of the most overlooked people groups in terms of ministry," said Pastor Craig. "Cultural and communication barriers keep them from faith in God through Jesus."

Kathy's own personal experience and 30-plus years as an advocate for the Deaf community gives her a unique perspective on reaching the hearing impaired for Christ and encouraging them to become His disciples. Signing through Dan Mustain, Education Pastor at Woodhaven, Kathy explained, "Our church members have proven that the Deaf can do ministry just like the Hearing. There are all levels of hearing at Woodhaven; some Deaf use ASL and some hear loud sounds, but can't identify spoken language. Whatever their ability, we encourage them to come and get involved."

Services beyond Sunday school and worship at Woodhaven include life skills classes, job placement, food and clothing pantries, addiction recovery classes — and even Deaf Dinner Theater at Woodhaven's Holy Grounds Coffee House.

"The new improvements in the Woodhaven Worship Center will add so much to the worship experience for our deaf, hearing impaired, and deaf and blind members, as well as for members who hear," said Pastor Craig.

In less than a week as the lights dim in the new Worship Center and the curtain goes up on the Christmas drama, Kathy will have the satisfaction of knowing that through her efforts and those of other Woodhaven volunteers, the message of Christ will ring out loud and clear.



Pastor Craig and Kathy Adegboye speak in ASL



Woodhaven Worship Center renovation



9920 Long Point  
Houston, TX 77055

Video Phone: 832.431.3811  
Voice: 713.467.3325

# KNIT TOGETHER WITH LOVE

**God's work is not restricted by the physical limitations of His children. One Houston's First member is proof that when God calls us to join Him in ministry, it's possible to make a difference in people's lives thousands of miles away without ever leaving home.**

"He [God] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." — 2 Corinthians 12:9

Somewhere in the world this Christmas, 50 needy children will receive a most precious and heartfelt gift. Boys and girls will open their own personal Operation Christmas Child shoebox to find, among other gifts inside, a doll knit together with love by Houston's First member Kathy Pritchett.

Seven years ago, Kathy and her husband Ben, Minister of Education at Houston's First, went on a mission trip that made such an impression on them that they decided it would be one of many more such trips they would take in the future. Before being able to travel again, however, it would be necessary for 57-year-old Kathy to undergo knee replacement surgery.



Ben and Kathy never anticipated that complications from surgery would not only prevent her from going on another mission trip, but would also rob her of mobility and 75 percent of her hearing. After a series of falls, an infection that refused to heal, and a second surgery to remove and replace the knee, Kathy's lengthy stay in a rehabilitation center allowed her to return home. But life would not be as it once was. Kathy's battle with infection would cause her to be confined to bed for the majority of each and every day.

Though Kathy's physical parameters may have been restricted, her ability to make a difference in the lives of others has not. One day last fall while the Pritchetts' granddaughter Lauren was visiting, Kathy watched the 11-year-old knitting on a loom while they talked. Seeing Lauren at work reminded Kathy of 'Comfort Dolls' she had seen displayed for a charitable event earlier that summer. After watching a few YouTube videos, and with Ben's help gathering supplies, Kathy taught herself to knit dolls to give to needy children. "Knitting on a loom is something I can do while lying in bed," Kathy explained. "I can reach out to children who don't have things to play with."

The Pritchetts spent several years packing boxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child, but shopping to fill entire boxes was no longer an option after Kathy's surgeries. When she learned that Samaritan's Purse takes individual items to include in the boxes, she knew how she could help.

Dolls of various nationalities wearing brightly colored clothing, hats or bows are the result of Kathy's tireless work. In spite of having arthritis in her hands, she was able to produce 50 unique dolls over the span of just a couple of months. "I wanted each child to have something special that's one of a kind," she said.

Kathy's passion for children's ministry began in the Pritchetts' hometown of Memphis, where they grew up and fell in love as high school sweethearts in the church youth group. As Ben's full-time ministry took them to Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas, Kathy also volunteered or served on staff in preschool or children's ministry at various churches where the couple had been called.

Children's ministry is a passion, but artistry also runs deep in Kathy's heart and hands. Sewing and ceramics were artistic endeavors she once enjoyed, and while employed at a college she did graphic design work.

As Kathy and Ben can testify, the course life can take is often painful and not always easily understood. But whatever the direction, God receives glory for a willing spirit and a desire to meet the needs of others.

Kathy plans to begin next year's Operation Christmas Child project very soon, and has a goal to create 100 dolls for Samaritan's Purse. Another organization recently approached her about making 50 dolls to send to children in Kenya. There are always more needs present than hands to fill them, but Kathy finds joy in doing her part. "It's a way I can touch people without actually being there," she said.



Kathy's dolls for Operation Christmas Child

Learn more about the 2016 mission trip locations and how you can share the Good News across the country or around the world at [HoustonsFirst.org/Missions](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Missions). Complete the Mission Trip Interest Form to take the first step toward being a difference maker on our national or international teams.

**CHRISTMAS DRAMA 2015**  
*Hope, Faith & Giving*

**Fri, Dec 11 @ 7p • Sat, Dec 12 @ 2p • Sun, Dec 13 @ 10:30a**  
Performances are free; donations accepted.

Homebound members of Houston's First are engaged in a variety of ministries that make a difference in the lives of those around them: writing greeting cards, sending notes of encouragement, crocheting baby bonnets for new mothers, and even leading Bible studies in their Continual Care facilities. Contact Dau Ayub ([Dau.Ayub@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Dau.Ayub@HoustonsFirst.org), 713.957.6766) in Pastoral Care to learn more about encouraging the homebound in ministry or becoming part of "Taking Church to our Flock," an initiative to include the homebound in church life.