

IN DOWNTOWN

presented by a diverse and bustling city. Members at the Downtown Campus are making an impact on the city in primarily five ministry areas: College students, the Arts, medical personnel, the homeless, and the business community. Highlighted here are a few of many extraordinary Downtown Campus volunteers, offering just a taste of the godly, effective and excellent ways the church is making a real impact on people's lives downtown and around the city, and introducing them to the love of Christ.



FAMILY FOR SINGLES

Filip Aarsland was introduced to Houston's First in 2014 when he attended MetroLive, a summer singles' worship gathering at The Loop Campus. The convenience and exciting atmosphere of downtown led him to pay a visit to a Life Bible Study (LBS) at the Downtown Campus. "I've never felt so welcome at a church!" said Filip. "After my first visit to the class, I never sat by myself in the service, and felt like I had known everyone for years." MetroLive took a hiatus, but those in his circle of friends didn't. The group continued hanging out together on Thursday nights, enjoying a meal to keep friendships current, and they are still meeting today.

Filip, now a "Grow Group" leader, is making the effort to create a "home" for singles new to Houston through Thursday Dinner. "We have a sit-down meal around a single, large table on Thursday nights," said Filip. "It's meant to be a peaceful place where people experience a taste of God's love by being taken care of and surrounded by friends." He routinely sees them join a Life Bible Study once they experience the camaraderie.

Young single adults come to Houston from all over the United States and the world (Jamaica, Nigeria, China, Indonesia, Norway, Germany, England, to name a few), and many have had no previous involvement in church before finding their way to the Downtown Campus. "Usually, the first place we meet people is at the worship service," said Filip. "Andy, a young professional who lived right down the street from the church, showed up with no Houston connections and has become a regular at Thursday Dinner. Through it he joined a Life Bible Study."

For nearly two years, Filip and the Thursday Dinner crowd have developed into quite a large family. "At dinner, people can quickly get to know other "family" members from our LBS," he said. "We've had up to 24 people at one time in my tiny apartment. I hope our Thursday Dinner will reach more people in downtown Houston, in multiple locations, to give people a glimpse of the immense love available to them through Christ."

UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

Downtown Campus Pastor Lee Hsia was born in Shanghai and speaks five languages, giving him a uniquely relevant perspective on downtown Houston. His vision for the future of the campus includes celebrating and encouraging its diversity as it carries the Gospel to the nations — just outside the front door. Now, the Downtown Campus is poised for future growth as the church commits resources to be a relevant biblical community to our neighbors in downtown Houston. "There's incredible diversity in downtown," said Lee. "With the ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious differences, there's no other reason why all these people would gather in community other than the common bond they share, and they seek, in Christ."



look inside to see where we are headed!

NEWS + UPDATES

ALL CAMPUSES

Deacons Meeting and Church Conference

Wed, Feb 8 @ — The Loop

Notice the new day for these monthly meetings — Wednesday evenings! The Deacon Administrative Committee meeting is at 5:30p in the Harbor Rm. All Deacons will meet at 6:30p in the Oasis Rm followed by the monthly Church Conference at 7:30p. Anyone may attend the Church Conference, but only church members may vote.

HighPoint Bible Study

Wednesdays @ 11:30a — 1010 Lamar (Tunnel Level)

This weekly downtown Bible study is open to everyone! Dr. David Self is teaching this Wednesday at 12:10p. Bring your lunch or purchase one there for \$8. Visit HoustonFirst.org to learn more.

CONTACT Diane.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org

CanHope

Mon, Feb 13 @ 6:45p — The Loop (Reception Rm)

CanHope ministers to families touched by cancer and those who love and care about them. At this meeting you'll share a meal with special guest Pastor Gregg Matte. The entree is provided, so please bring a salad or vegetable. Come enjoy this time of testimony, prayer and fellowship! RSVP to 713.957.6764.

CONTACT Sherry.Oradat@HoustonFirst.org

NEXTGEN MINISTRIES

Rush Week

Jul 21-27 — Panama City Beach, FL

Students entering 7th-12th grades are invited to this unique experience! Rush Week is 50% camp and 50% missions. Students partner with local churches in Panama City, FL, to assist in ministry, service projects, and evangelism to people in the city each morning. In the afternoon we play, compete, laugh, relax, worship, and learn more about God. This is the largest event The HUB Student Ministry organizes and we want YOU to be there! Registration begins today at HoustonFirst.org.

CONTACT Tony.Bianco@HoustonFirst.org

YOUNG SINGLE ADULTS

Snow Jam

Apr 6-10 — Winter Park, CO

Have you been skiing before? Cool! Never skied? Fantastic! Summit Snow Jam 2017 is a great opportunity to spend time in the mountains building friendships. We enjoy the beauty of God's creation and the fun of skiing, and then join together nightly for fellowship and quality time. Learn more about the trip and pricing and register by Mon, Mar 6, at HoustonFirst.org.

CONTACT Joshua.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org

MARRIED YOUNG ADULTS

Mingling of Souls

Feb 10-11, 2017 — The Loop (Worship Ctr)

Houston's First welcomes back Matt and Lauren Chandler as they present the Mingling of Souls Marriage Conference live at The Loop Campus. With new content to share, Matt and Lauren will cover the following areas at this citywide event open to married couples of all ages: The Covenant, Progress, Common Grace, and The Long Game. Find out more and register at HoustonFirst.org.

CONTACT Kristin.Hawkinson@HoustonFirst.org

WOMEN

The Table

Thursdays, Feb 2-Mar 9 @ 6:30-8p

The Loop (Worship Ctr)

Women of all ages are invited to experience the presence of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit! Kay Altic, Kelly Matte and Star Smith will teach as women from across Houston join together at The Table to embrace the hope and provision found in Scripture. Register for childcare at HoustonFirst.org for just \$10 per child per night (\$5 each additional child).

CONTACT Meredith.Cann@HoustonFirst.org

MEN

Warrior's Heart

Thursdays @ 6:30-7:30a — The Loop (Garden Rm)

Warrior's Heart is a weekly morning Bible study for men focusing on clear biblical teaching followed by real conversations. Our new series, "The Core Values of Manhood," covers Brotherhood, Truth, Courage, Honor, and Mission. Eric Reed will teach this week. Breakfast is available for purchase in the Cafe. Registration at HoustonFirst.org is encouraged, but not required.

CONTACT Emily.Brown@HoustonFirst.org

THE LOOP

MidLink & Milestones

Wednesday evenings beginning Feb 1 — The Loop

This semester will bring a fresh, new area of growth to your life. Whether you've walked with God most of your life or come to Christ recently, He has much to show and teach you. MidLink and Milestones are designed to give you access to all of this! Check out a class, enjoy a meal at MidLink Cafe, and get to know someone new as you connect to a relevant biblical community. We also have a great line-up for kids with Mission Friends (Birth to Kinder), KidLink (1st-5th grade), Wired (6th-8th grade) and AMP (9th-12th grade). Find the full schedule and list of classes at HoustonFirst.org.

CONTACT Courtney.Schisler@HoustonFirst.org

WOMEN

IF: Gathering

Fri, Feb 3 @ 7-10p & Sat, Feb 4 @ 9a-12p

The Loop (Rm 253/254)

This local two-day gathering will bring women together from around the world to look at one of the most influential generations that has ever lived — the early church. The way God moved through the early church was simple and pure, and we believe they are the model we need right now. Find out more about the local "IF: Gathering" and register at HoustonFirst.org.

CONTACT Meredith.Cann@HoustonFirst.org

CYPRESS

Super Build

Sat, Feb 4 @ 7:30a-2p — Cypress Ministry Center

Super Build is an exciting opportunity to leave a lasting legacy by building affordable homes for low to moderate income Houstonians during Super Bowl season (weekends, Jan 21-Feb 25). Houston's First is partnering with Houston Habitat for Humanity and other community churches, and the Cypress Campus is recruiting 25 men and women over age 16 to serve on Sat, Feb 4. No experience required! Register at HoustonFirst.org.

CONTACT Susan.Newman@HoustonFirst.org

DOWNTOWN WOMEN

Women's Ministry Luncheon

Sun, Feb 5 @ 1p — 1010 Lamar

All women are invited to the Downtown Campus for a ladies' lunch! Fellowship together over a meal, get to know one another, and receive a preview of the women's events at the Downtown Campus for the spring of 2017. Register at HoustonFirst.org by Thu, Feb 2.

CONTACT Erin.Krafft@HoustonFirst.org

ESPAÑOL

Growing our Love

Sat, Feb 11 @ 6p — Cafe Adobe

Save the date for this special event for couples! Enjoy a nice dinner with your loved one and a word of encouragement to grow in your marriage or relationship followed by real conversations. Our new series, "The Core Values of Manhood," covers Brotherhood, Truth, Courage, Honor, and Mission. Eric Reed will teach this week. Breakfast is available for purchase in the Cafe. Registration at HoustonFirst.org is encouraged, but not required.

CONTACT Karina.Bazaldua@HoustonFirst.org

SIENNA

Daddy-Daughter Sock Hop

Fri, Feb 3 @ 6-8p — Sienna Worship Center

Calling all dads, grandpas and uncles! Treat your little lady to a night of fun at the hop! You and your special girl will enjoy dinner and dessert, and then dance the night away. The Sock Hop is open to girls (and dads) of all ages, and '50s attire is encouraged! Register at HoustonFirst.org for \$8 per person; \$20 max/family.

CONTACT Cara.Buis@HoustonFirst.org

make it your church

Make it Your Church Orientation

Discover what it means to be a member of Houston's First! You'll meet staff members, hear about our mission, vision, and ministries, and learn how you can make Houston's First your church. RSVP and learn more about membership at HoustonFirst.org.

- The Loop — Sun, Feb 12 @ 12:30p — The Loop (Fellowship Ctr)
- Cypress — Sun, Feb 12 @ 1p — Cypress Ministry Ctr
- Downtown — Sun, Feb 26 @ 12:45p — 1010 Lamar
- Español — Sun, Feb 19 @ 6:30p — The Loop (Reception Rm)
- Sienna — Sun, Feb 12 @ 12:30p — 4309 Sienna Pkwy (The Corner)

GIVING LIFE AWAY

First Pantry

Sun, Feb 5 — The Loop

The Faith Center's Food Pantry & Clothes Closets serve more than 1,000 people each month. Next Sunday, Feb 5, please bring nonperishable food items, gently used clothing and other household goods to The Loop Campus to help serve those in need. Donation bins will be located at main entrances to the church and in the Missions Office.

LIFE BIBLE STUDIES

Life Bible Studies are the primary method for connecting with others and growing together at Houston's First. Visit HoustonFirst.org to find one that's right for you, or ask the Guest Experience (GX) team at your campus for assistance.



JAN 29, 2017

THE DOWNTOWN PROJECT

extending our reach in the heart of Houston



GOING GIVING PRAYING

TAKING GROUND

Houston's downtown revitalization efforts over the past decade have inspired people from here and around the globe to make downtown not only a place to work and play — but also to live. And where people are, there are opportunities for ministry. The Downtown Campus of Houston's First took root in 2011 to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the community. In the years since, church members have followed God's call to make a difference in unique ways, stepping out in many cases beyond their comfort zones to meet the challenges

OPENING DOORS

Billie Riley, a brain cancer survivor and self-proclaimed "full-time Christian volunteer," finished the Aramco Houston Half Marathon this month as part of the Downtown Campus team. In the process, she raised \$1,500 for Open Door Mission, one of five ministries in Houston she supports routinely with her time and money.

For the past four years she spent her days (and many evenings) volunteering at Open Door Mission in downtown, where Billie and other volunteers from the Downtown Campus hold a Christmas Eve service and dinner for the residents. "We want the men to feel how special they are in Christ," she said. "The volunteers serve the men and then sit around the table with them for conversation."

Each week, Billie volunteers in Celebrate Recovery to help men with addictive behaviors reunite with their families. She offers co-dependency classes for wives or other female relatives of the men staying at Open Door, reinforcing the idea that God specializes in offering second chances.

"I live and breathe to see the men turn a corner and be restored to their families or find a job," said Billie. Also an advocate for adult literacy, she promotes education at Open Door. "I've seen men struggle to read," she said. "We developed a literacy test that measures the men's ability to read without making them feel ashamed or embarrassed. It helps us know where we need to start."

A Convalescent Care area has opened for older or ill men who come for a place to stay. Billie prays and opens the Scriptures with them. She also searches for low/no-cost housing for those who can transition to living on their own. "Steve, who's blind, came here, turned to the Lord and sent his dad a card after having no contact with his family for years. His dad called him from New Jersey and shared that his mother had passed away the previous year," said Billie. "Steve spent a year and a half at Open Door and we found him his own place. He's still connected with his dad, even today. God always makes a way."

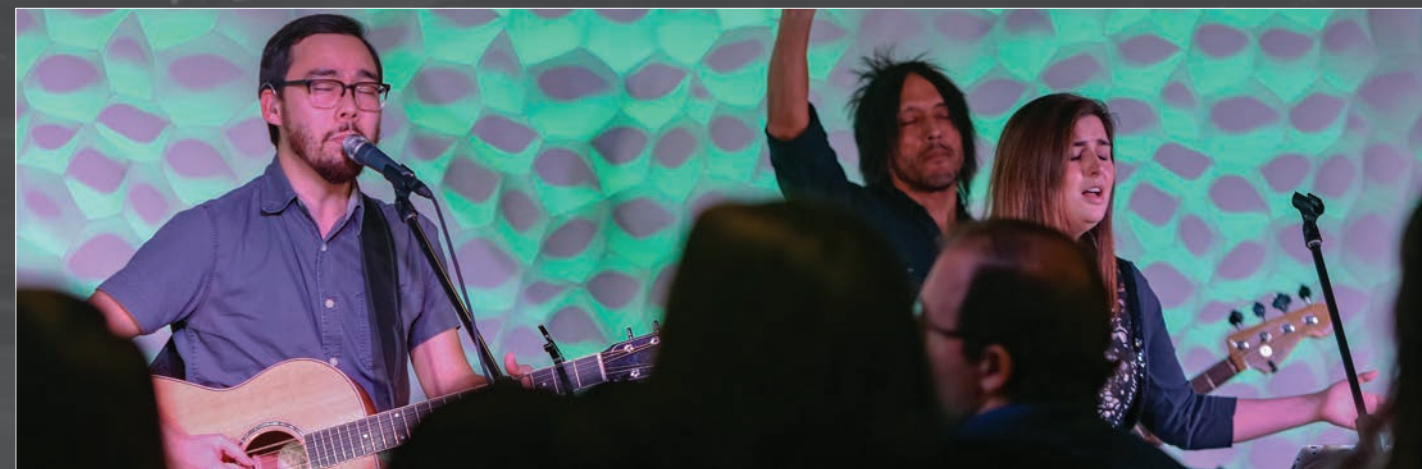


INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

Becky Morris, an active volunteer at the Downtown Campus, has a heart for the nations, and has been an advocate for the American-Chinese Fellowship for a decade. The meetings, all Chinese people, concentrate on visiting scholars, researchers and visitors working in or around the Texas Medical Center.

As international visitors with limited access to their own transportation, they gravitate to others from China for friendship while in Houston, some who are here for more than a year. They seek out ways to learn about American culture and the language. Once the visitors engage at ACF, they get more than lessons in language and culture. Some receive Christ as Savior and return to their own countries as His emissaries.

"These incredibly educated visitors to Houston have a heart to learn, so ACF provides a meal and Bible study on Friday nights," said Becky. "They stay and listen to the study. They see many uneducated Chinese in their country embrace Christ, but wonder what He can do for them. When they hear the truth of the Gospel, it leaves them astounded."



EXPANDING OUR TERRITORY

THE DOWNTOWN PROJECT

THE PROPOSAL

Members and ministry are thriving at the Downtown Campus despite having to gather on Sundays at 1010 Lamar and meeting during the week at separate office space a mile away at Vine Street Studios. Now, the Lord is doing a new thing in downtown Houston, expanding our territory by giving us the opportunity to purchase 1730 Jefferson — an entire city block with a building that meets the needs of our growing and diverse community.

“I’m excited about the Downtown Project — a new opportunity in the heart of our city,” said Pastor Gregg Matte. “All that we do, as a people, and as a church, is to extend the Gospel message. I believe this uniquely located property will be a new beacon for that purpose in downtown — where our church began 176 years ago.”

In this season of praying, giving and going at Houston’s First, our church family plays a vital role in moving forward on the Downtown Project. The following information will help you learn about the project, the vision and how your generosity will make it happen.



THE PROPERTY

- Too many restrooms, too much gathering space and a room bigger than anybody needs. That’s what other potential buyers had to say about 1730 Jefferson — and it’s what makes the property ideal for our church.
- Built in 2003
 - One full city block
 - 40,000 square feet
 - Three floors
 - Auditorium that seats 600
 - Office, Life Bible Study and NextGen space
 - Full professional kitchen
 - Surface lot and adjacent parking



THE PROXIMITY

In the corner of downtown formed by I-45 and I-69/US 59, 1730 Jefferson is near Midtown to the west, EaDo (East Downtown) to the east and the Third Ward to the south. Many of downtown’s key destinations are within walking distance from the property, too.

THE PEOPLE

- Downtown is home to office buildings, theaters, stadiums — and, it’s the home of a growing number of residents, too. With a permanent home of our own at 1730 Jefferson, Houston’s First will be well-situated to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population in the heart of the city.
- Downtown population is currently only 5,000
 - 19 new residential towers and complexes are being built
 - Downtown population projected to be 20,000 by 2020
 - EaDo (East Downtown) population is 3,100 and growing 25% annually
 - Midtown population is 70,000 and growing 20% annually



1730 JEFFERSON

THE DAY OF GIVING

SUN, FEB 26

When the opportunity to purchase 1730 Jefferson was first presented to church leaders, we were already in a position to seriously consider making an offer. Once we discerned that God was leading us to buy the property, thanks to the ongoing generosity of the Houston’s First family over the years and the faithful stewardship of those contributions, we had the funds for the purchase price.

Now, our task is to turn an office building into a church building. Existing spaces will be converted into areas dedicated for NextGen ministries (birth thru 18), college students, Life Bible Studies, and other ministries — including the Worship Center and other gathering spaces.

On Sun, Feb 26, the Houston’s First family at all of our campuses will submit their contributions to the Downtown Project. Every dollar received that day will go to this endeavor — whether the gift is given in person or as a one-time gift online. Your generosity will enable 1730 Jefferson to become a place of ministry to our city!

(Note: All recurring contributions received through our online giving platform will go toward Great Commission Giving (operating budget) as usual. Only contributions submitted that day at each campus (cash/check) and online gifts submitted that day as one-time contributions designated for the Downtown Project will be applied to the Downtown Project.)

