

welcome.

A MONTHLY SNAPSHOT • HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH • PASTOR GREGG MATTE

DEC
2017

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FROM FIRST|WORSHIP**
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HOPE FOR THE AGES

Christmas at Houston's First

It takes EVERYONE + everything

In his message series "Everyone + Everything" this fall, Pastor Gregg introduced a revised version of our Generosity Ladder that focuses on where you're giving from instead of what you're giving to. Each step reflects a deeper commitment to giving back to God what He has already given to you.

For Houston's First to accomplish everything He has called us to do, we need everyone to share their attention, resources, and time. So, where are you now on the ladder and where do you want to be when it comes to giving back to God's kingdom?

Regarding financial resources, we encourage everyone — from first-time givers to lifetime contributors — to make a contribution to Houston's First this December and help the church build a solid platform for launching into 2018. In fact, many Houston's First family members may want to give to the church before the end of the calendar year so their gifts will qualify as tax-deductible contributions.

Generosity to Houston's First (Jan 1–Nov 19, 2017)

Generosity **\$11,378,782**
Generosity Goal **\$11,843,496**

Givers to Houston's First (Jan 1–Nov 19, 2017)

First-Time Givers **636**
Total Givers **6,053**

Missions (Jan 1–Nov 19, 2017)

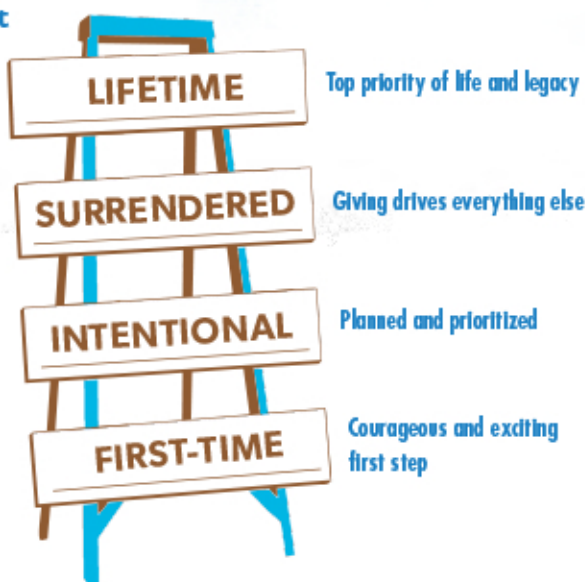
2,143 team members on **36** trips to
13 countries on **5** continents

New Members (Jan 1–Nov 19, 2017)

756 new church members

Attendance (Jan 1–Nov 19, 2017)

224,938 in Life Bible Studies (**5,109** weekly average)
247,490 in Worship Services (**5,266** weekly average)
44,904 on Webcast (**998** weekly average)



Worship Service attendance growth (2016–2017)

63.1% growth at Cypress Campus
63.4% growth at Downtown Campus
24.2% growth at Español Campus
31.8% growth at Senna Campus

MAKING A YEAR-END CONTRIBUTION

For 2017 contributions to qualify as tax-deductible, they must be received by the church one of the following four ways. Contact Betsy.Walker@HoustonsFirst.org or call her at 713.957.5806 should you desire additional information.

- **Online:** Giving online at HoustonsFirst.org is always a convenient way to share your generosity. Contributions submitted at HoustonsFirst.org must be made before midnight (Central) on Sun, Dec 31, 2017.
- **Mobile:** Contributions submitted on a mobile device must be made before midnight (Central) on Sun, Dec 31, 2017. To make a mobile contribution, download the official Houston's First Baptist Church app for iOS or Android, select your campus, and use the GIVE option.
- **In Person:** Contributions can be submitted during the offering moment in the worship services at every campus between now and Sun, Dec 31, 2017. If not submitted in person then, contributions must be brought to the church's Financial Services office by no later than 6:30p on that day. The office is located at The Loop Campus at 7401 Katy Freeway and will be open on Sun, Dec 31, from 9a–12:30p and 4–6:30p.
- **By Mail:** The postmark date on the envelope must be before Jan 1, 2018. Contributions should be mailed to Houston's First Baptist Church, 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, Texas 77024.



Cypress Campus hosts Gy-Fair Helping Hands



Summit Young Singles' 20th Annual Hoedown



Downtown Campus renovations are underway



Downtown Campus Pastor Lee Hsia with local leaders



Senna Campus honors volunteers like Sandy O'Brien



Español Campus gathers for Celebración de Día de Gracias



Pastor Gregg hands out staff awards at Hunt Retreat



The Loop Campus HUB Students at Turkey Bowl



In recent months, we have experienced devastation and tragedy within our city, nation, and around the world. So many people are picking up the pieces, trying to rebuild their homes and lives. Many are searching for a glimpse of this thing called "hope."

How can Houston's First continue the work of spreading the anthem of hope to weary hearts and souls?


One way we're doing that in our city this Christmas season is through our new 2017 Christmas album — *Hope for the Ages*. Missions and First|Worship are teaming up to give a copy of the album to 3,000 victims of Hurricane Harvey.

But we aren't finished yet!

We invite you to join us in bringing these songs of Christmas to our city. For every album sold during the month of December, we will give away one album to a family affected by Harvey.

Our prayer is for these 14 new Christmas songs to bring peace, light, and healing through the words and melodies they contain. The songs testify that hope is not found in a program or a package — it is found in Jesus, the Prince of Peace who came to save. He is the only One who gives hope for today, and the comfort and courage for whatever tomorrow holds.

Hope for the Ages is available for purchase from CornerBooks and on iTunes. All the songs on this album were written and performed by our worship teams at Houston's First. So, get your copy today and help spread the message of the hope of Jesus Christ through the songs of Christmas!

Available from
CornerBooks  **iTunes**

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

SUN, DEC 24

In the final hours before Christmas Day, gather with the Houston's First family for candlelight services at one of our five campuses as we prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

The Loop @ 2p • 4p • 6p Español @ 2p
Cypress @ 4p • 6p Sienna @ 2p • 4p • 6p
Downtown @ 4p • 6p

Our regular Sunday worship services and Life Bible Studies will not meet.

Visit HoustonsFirst.org for details about childcare and more at your campus.

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

SUN, DEC 31

The last day of 2017 will include our regular Sunday schedule with worship services and Life Bible Studies at every campus.

OUR CAMPUSES

The Loop
7401 Katy Freeway
Houston, TX 77024

Cypress
11011 Mason Road
Cypress, TX 77433
(Next to Bridgeland High School)

Downtown
1730 Jefferson
Houston, TX 77003

Español
7401 Katy Freeway
Houston, TX 77024

Sienna
4309 Sienna Parkway
Missouri City, TX 77459

Gregg Matte, Pastor
 [GreggMatte](#)
 [@GreggMatte](#)
 [@PastorGregg](#)

HoustonsFirst.org
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Welcome to Houston's First!

One sure way to make somebody feel welcome in your home is to offer a homemade treat. Providing the entire Houston's First family and our guests with a plate of goodies would be a challenge to pull off, so we're giving you the recipes for some of our favorite dishes that our families like to make this time of year. (*)

What are your favorite holiday dishes? Share them on social media with the hashtag #HFBCRecipes or submit them on HoustonsFirst.org when you look up our recipes' baking instructions. Consider this a way to "welcome" the entire Houston's First family into your home this Christmas!

From our families to yours, we wish you a joyful and very Merry Christmas!

In Him,

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM OF HOUSTON'S FIRST

(*) The ingredients are listed below, and you can find baking instructions at HoustonsFirst.org (search "Recipes"), on the Houston's First Baptist Church app, and on our social media channels.



GREGG & KELLY MATTE
SENIOR PASTOR

Molten Chocolate Cake

1 tablespoon butter, melted
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
¾ cup butter, cut into pieces
3 (4 oz) premium semisweet chocolate baking bars, broken into chunks
½ cup whipping cream
1 ¾ cups of egg substitute
¾ cup sugar
⅝ cup all purpose powdered sugar



DAVID & BONNIE SELF
EXECUTIVE PASTOR

Pecan Fudge Pie

1-1¼ cup of light corn syrup
½ cup sugar
⅓ cup baking soda
⅓ cup all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
2 eggs
3 tablespoons butter, softened
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup pecans
1 unbaked pastry shell (9 inches)
Whipped cream



WILLIAM & NANCY TAYLOR
MISSIONS PASTOR

Mommy Ann's Macaroni & Cheese

½ small box Velveeta Cheese (I used 12 ounces of a large box)
1 eight ounce box of macaroni
3 eggs
4 cups of whole milk
8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated
Salt and pepper
½ stick of butter



STEPHEN & STAR SMITH
GATHERING PASTOR

Zuppa Toscana Soup

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 pound Italian sausage, hot or mild
4 oz bacon, diced into ½ inch pieces
1 small onion, minced
5 cups low sodium chicken broth
2 cups water
2 medium russet potatoes, skins washed
1 ½ teaspoons sugar
Salt and fresh ground pepper
2 ½ cups half and half
1 cup packed kale chopped into bite size pieces
1 cup finely shredded Romano cheese for serving

OUR SIGNATURE STATEMENT

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 (Matthew 28:19-20).

JOINING HOUSTON'S FIRST

Membership at Houston's First is open to anyone who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins and has been baptized by immersion. At the end of the worship service, come forward to speak with a minister or volunteer, or make your way to the Connection Center at your campus. They will walk you through the process of making Houston's First your church!

LIFE BIBLE STUDIES

Life Bible Studies are the primary method for connecting with others in smaller settings and growing together at Houston's First. Visit HoustonsFirst.org to explore the many options, or ask a Guest Experience Team member at your campus for assistance in finding one that's right for you.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOUSTON'S FIRST?

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

WITH NATALIE GRANT
AND DANNY GOKEY

Sat, Dec 9 @ 3p & 7:30p

The Loop Campus

Reserved seats \$10 • \$12 • \$15

Tickets available at HoustonsFirst.org



MIDNIGHT MADNESS | Sharpening the Focus



Training for current and prospective
Life Bible Study leaders from every campus
and every age group and every position

FRI, JAN 26 @ 5:30P-MIDNIGHT — THE LOOP CAMPUS

Vision • Training • Giveaways • Fun • Food

Free to attend • Register at HoustonsFirst.org

ALL CAMPUSES

HOLY LAND TOUR INTEREST MEETING

Tue, Dec 5 @ 7-8:30p

The Loop (Connection Center)

Explore the Holy Land with Houston's First on May 17-26, 2018! At this meeting, learn about this trip to the Sea of Galilee and Dead Sea regions, Jerusalem, and more. For now, visit HoustonsFirst.org for cost information and to download a copy of the full itinerary. Tour hosts are Houston's First members Peggy Bain, Drew Walters, and Zac Huffy, minister of campus development at the Cypress Campus. The interest meeting is not required to go on the trip, but you're encouraged to come and learn more about this life changing tour!

CONTACT: Susan.Newman@HoustonsFirst.org

CANHOPE

Mon, Dec 11 @ 6:45-8p

The Loop (Reception Rm)

Ministering to families touched by cancer, CanHope invites you to this end-of-year gathering where we'll reflect on where God has taken us and praise Him for supporting us along the way. Everyone is invited! An entrée is provided; please bring a salad, vegetable or fruit. RSVP to 713.957.6764 or contact Sherry.Oradot@HoustonsFirst.org.

MEN: SERVE

Sat, Jan 13 @ 8a-1p

Men will go out in teams throughout our city to serve the widows of our church. Whether it's yard work, home maintenance, car repairs — or simply having a conversation — there is a role for you to play. Register by Fri, Jan 5, at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Heather.Kuehler@HoustonsFirst.org

THE LOOP

FIT TO FINISH

Jan 8-28, 2018

Calling all Houston's First Fitness Center members and non-members: Reinforce your New Year's resolutions with our three-week Fit to Finish challenge! Be pushed beyond what you thought you could do with our trainers encouraging you every step of the way. You'll receive Fit Tips, accountability, weekly guidance, a T-shirt, and so much more! After three weeks of hard work and dedication, a winner will receive a Grand Prize and we'll celebrate at our annual Fitness Expo on Sun, Jan 28. Register for \$15 per person from Dec 1-Jan 2 at HoustonsFirst.org or at the Fitness & Recreation Center's Front Desk.

CONTACT: Becca.Angelo@HoustonsFirst.org

STEPHEN MINISTRY TRAINING

Applications due Wed, Jan 10

Stephen Ministry Training equips our members through 50 hours of classes to come alongside an individual who is experiencing loneliness, relationship difficulties, loss, divorce, grief or spiritual crisis in their lives. If interested in becoming a Stephen Minister, search "Stephen Minister" at HoustonsFirst.org or request an application from the Pastoral Care Office. Classes begin Wednesday nights during MidLink in the spring.

CONTACT: Denise.Munton@HoustonsFirst.org

CYPRESS

FIRST @ FRIDAY NIGHT BITES

Fri, Dec 8 @ 5-9p — Lakeland Village Center

Christmas is coming to Friday Night Bites! The second Friday of every month, the Bridgeland community invites neighbors to gather for food trucks and fun. The Cypress Campus will join in and be a light to our community welcoming others to our church and inviting them to Christmas Eve services. You can be a part of this in many ways including helping host a petting zoo, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, man the Cypress Campus tent, hand out free cocoa and Christmas cookies, and much more! Want to volunteer?

CONTACT: Teal.Moran@HoustonsFirst.org

CY-HUB GIRLS CRAZY CHRISTMAS SLEEPOVER

Fri, Dec 15 @ 6p-Sat, Dec 16 @ 10:30a

Cypress Campus

Cy-HUB girls in 6th-12th grades — get ready for a night of crazy Christmas surprises and sweet fun! Who could you invite to this evening just for us girls? The cost is \$10 per person, and you can register online at HoustonsFirst.org or on the HUB Cypress app.

CONTACT: Hannah.Stoval@HoustonsFirst.org

DOWNTOWN

BE ALL-IN AT DOWNTOWN!

Ever wanted to be on the ground floor of something new — helping build it then seeing it through to fruition and beyond? The Downtown Campus has been at 1730 Jefferson for months, but we are just starting our chapter here. Renovations are underway and our NextGen, College, and adult ministries are thriving. Anyone and everyone can make a difference here, so come be all-in for what God is doing Downtown!

CONTACT: Lee.Hsia@HoustonsFirst.org

ESPAÑOL

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

Sun, Dec 31 @ 5p — Chapel

@ 7:30p — Hunt Retreat

Wrap up 2017 at our end-of-year service with a special time of prayer with your family, then come ring in the new year at Hunt Retreat with your campus familia! Hunt Retreat is the church's property in Brookshire, TX, about 35 miles west of The Loop Campus. Overnight accommodations are available, so register by Sun, Dec 17 at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Douglas.Hernandez@HoustonsFirst.org

SIENNA

SECOND MILE'S CHRISTMAS TOY STORE

Sundays, Dec 3 and Dec 10

The Sienna Campus has partnered with Second Mile Mission Center for several years as they help Fort Bend County residents in poverty and crisis by providing basic needs and opportunities to take next steps in their lives. This Christmas season, please bring a new, unwrapped gift for children up to 12 years old. (The greatest need is for ages 8 to 12.) These toys will benefit Fort Bend families who might otherwise not have Christmas!

CONTACT: Sheena.Abraham_Sheena.Oommen@gmail.com

2018 SPRING MISSION TRIPS

While your thoughts are mostly on Christmas this month, it's never too soon to think about our spring mission trips. Choose from Costa Rica (Spring Break), Oakland, CA (Spring Break with Sienna Campus), or New York City (Easter weekend). Visit HoustonsFirst.org to learn about these and more than 20 other trips taking place in 2018. Then, complete an Interest Form to start the process of joining a Houston's First mission team!

SAVE THE DATE

DANIEL FAST

Early January

Join Pastor Gregg and the Houston's First staff as we fast and pray for the year ahead

MIDLINK

The spring semester of MidLink (Wednesday evening programming) begins in January at most campuses, with preview nights providing a look at what's offered

The Loop — Wed, Jan 31 (Preview Wed, Jan 24)

Cypress — Wed, Jan 17 (preview Wed, Jan 10)

Espanol — Wed, Jan 31 (Preview Wed, Jan 24)

Sienna — Wed, Jan 31 (Preview Wed, Jan 24)

THE TABLE:

A WORSHIP GATHERING FOR WOMEN

Tuesdays, Jan 23-Feb 27 @ 6:30-8p

The Loop (Chapel)

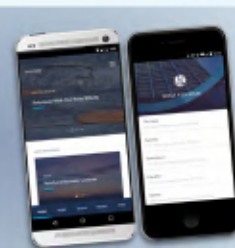
Women from across the city will gather at The Table for an evening of worship and teaching

FITNESS EXPO

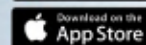
Sun, Jan 28 @ 12:15-2p — The Loop

Discover how the Fitness & Recreation Center can support your health and wellness goals

Visit HoustonsFirst.org or the Houston's First Baptist Church app for details about these and other upcoming opportunities!



Download the
Houston's First Baptist Church app!



WHERE WILL YOU GO IN 2018?

Houston's First is sending out more than
20 MISSION TEAMS to **15 COUNTRIES** on **5 CONTINENTS**
to share the love and truth of Jesus.

Visit HoustonsFirst.org and search "Mission Trips" for trip dates, costs, and other details. Then, take the first step toward joining a team by completing an Interest Form available at HoustonsFirst.org, on the official Houston's First Baptist Church app, or by texting **HFBCMISSIONS** to **41411**.

Brazil
Cambodia
Costa Rica
Culiacán, Mexico
Dominican Republic
East Asia
Germany
Guatemala
Houston
Israel

Kenya
London
Middle East
Montana
New York City
Norway
Oakland
Switzerland
Xàtiva, Spain

"... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." – Acts 1:8

GO