

welcome.

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

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Welcome to HOUSTON'S FIRST!

It's easy to take things for granted, isn't it? We become so accustomed to blessings in our lives that we can take them as a fact of life — but we know that that is not the case! Rather, as James 1:17 tells us, "every good and perfect gift is from above." They are not "a given" — but they are *graciously* given.

Paul provides helpful counsel on how followers of Christ should live their lives—"Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18) Notice that he ramps us up toward thanksgiving. "First of all, you're going to have to be a person who's always rejoicing," he says, "even when things are going bad." Then, he wants us to be people who constantly pray—not just when the pastor prays, not just when things are going bad. *Constantly* praying.

This lifestyle of rejoicing and praying positions us to live with a heart that is thankful *for* everything and *in* every circumstance. Having such a grateful heart spills out into all aspects of our lives. You'll find that it will bless your job, your singleness,

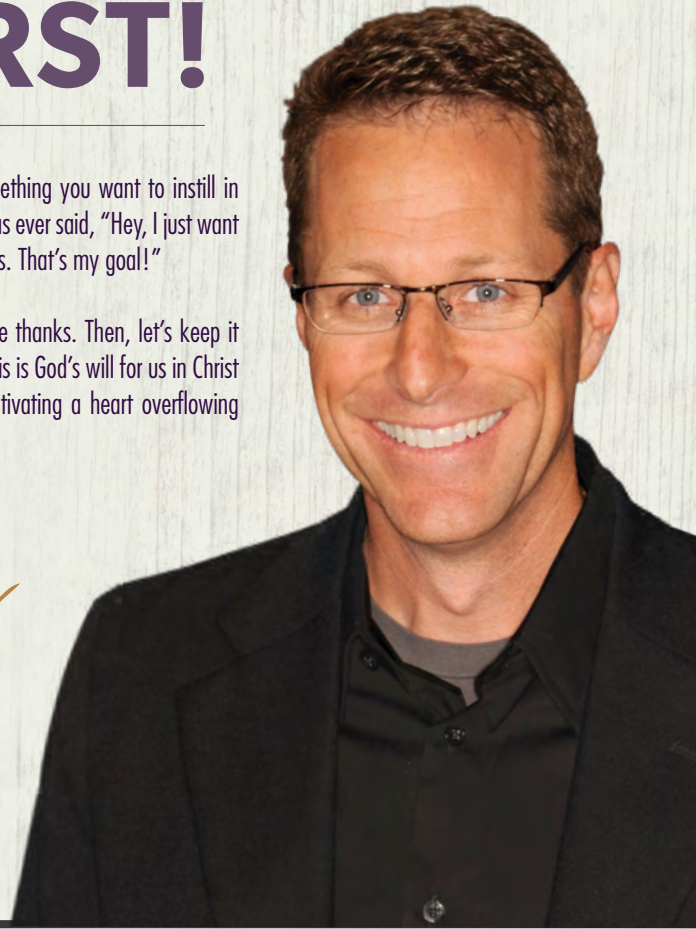
your marriage—and it will be something you want to instill in your kids' lives. Besides, no parent has ever said, "Hey, I just want to raise some selfish and entitled kids. That's my goal!"

So, let's rejoice. Let's pray. Let's give thanks. Then, let's keep it up and never stop. Why? Because this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. Let's be intentional about cultivating a heart overflowing with gratitude.

Gratefully,

Pastor Gregg

Pastor Gregg Matte



Be Thankful.



The Thanksgiving holiday does not have a monopoly on gratitude. God's Word says to "give thanks in everything" (1 Thessalonians 5:18), so that extends to every day of the year. But, just as children often have to be reminded to say "thank you," all of us could use some encouragement to live with a grateful heart.

As our InnerChange focus turns to being thankful in November, here are a few recommended ways to develop and express gratitude. Whether using these or your own ideas, be intentional about giving thanks "in everything" this month. Let's work toward every day being a day of thanksgiving—with or without turkey and pumpkin pie!

- Keep a "gratitude journal" and write down three things you're grateful for every morning to start your day focused on giving thanks
- Treat someone to coffee or lunch and thank them in person for something they've done or for the role they play in your life

Our NextGen Ministries offer these suggestions:

- Preschoolers — write "I am thankful for ..." on a poster board and fill it with words or pictures of things that you are thankful for
- Children — with a parent, bake homemade treats and deliver them in person to a fire or police station along with a large thank you card
- Students — send thank you notes to adults who have had a positive impact on your life (teachers, volunteers, relatives, coaches, etc.)

Other ways I can be thankful...



Find more ideas for being thankful — and share your own — at HoustonsFirst.org



Text **INNERCHANGE** to **41411** for related updates, resources, and encouragement

GIVING THANKS *by* GIVING BACK

Words can fail us when trying to convey how grateful we are for others' acts of kindness. Thousands of people flooded by Hurricane Harvey found themselves in that situation when wanting to thank volunteers who helped them in the aftermath of the storm. Since actions can speak louder than words, "paying it forward" by helping Hurricane Florence victims in North Carolina is one way several Houston's First family members flooded by Harvey expressed their gratitude for all that had been done for them.



Annie (3rd from left) and Keith (far right) Chan with team in Wilmington, NC

KEITH & ANNIE

Keith & Annie Chan's home in Meyerland flooded three years in a row in the Memorial Day (2015) and Tax Day (2016) floods, and during Harvey last year. Their home sits empty along with blocks of abandoned homes with "For Sale" signs lining the streets. Keith, Annie, and their dog have no plans to return to Meyerland, but retreated last year to higher ground in an apartment they now call home.

Though Annie says it's not an expertise they wanted to develop, experiencing three floods in three years has nevertheless given them insight into the recovery process. "Keith developed a list on how to handle the aftermath of a flood—what to do, who to talk to, and how to get the ball rolling for recovery," she said.

Even as Florence was barreling toward the coast, Pastor Gregg put out the call for volunteers to go to North Carolina for clean-up after the storm. "Our Life Bible Study and other members of the community had extended such kindness to us after our flooding," Annie said. "We heard God saying, 'Comfort others with the same comfort you have received.'"

Though their time in Wilmington, NC, was filled with long, hard days of remediation, Keith and Annie had a couple of opportunities to encourage and comfort homeowners. "We told them what they could expect and do next after the clean up," Annie said. "Though we've been down that road three times, we know that God has something good in store for us, and for them, too."

THEY WERE *not* ALONE

Houston's First has sent seven teams to help with Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael recovery efforts. Among the people who signed up were more than two dozen whose homes flooded during Harvey—people wanting to do for others what had been done for them.

KYLE

Kyle & Robin Preston and their three children have a home in Houston's Energy Corridor, not far from Addicks and Barker dams. The neighborhood was flooded when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released water from the reservoirs to avoid a catastrophic failure that could have flooded much of the West Houston metro area otherwise.

Living the past year in a townhouse near the kids' schools, Kyle recalls making it a point to avoid watching weather coverage as Florence was approaching land. He didn't want to watch another hurricane wreak havoc. But, he felt God tugging at him to get involved. Kyle reasoned that they weren't even back in their own house; why should he go muck out someone else's?

"God kept working on my heart," he said, "so when I brought it up to Robin, she said, 'Go!'" The night before the team from Houston's First was scheduled to leave, Kyle bought a ticket to Wilmington. He beat them there by 10 minutes.

Kyle, team members from Houston's First, and College Acres Baptist Church mucked out houses, talked to residents, helped them fill out FEMA forms and prayed with neighbors affected by the floods. "It was good for me to deal with my own feelings by helping others," said Kyle. "I left there with a better relationship with the Lord."



Kyle Preston

ADRIENNE

Adrienne Lee and her parents lived together in Dickinson when the floods began rising at one in the morning on August 27. Close friends who were running from high water showed up at Adrienne's door for safe harbor. When they awoke the next morning, a foot and a half of water stood in the house.

"The flood was horrible," Adrienne said. "But a church came from California to Houston and helped muck out our house."

Adrienne learned about the Houston's First teams going to Wilmington to help flood victims and she prayed about her response.

"I'm an introvert," said Adrienne, "But I felt prompted to step out of my comfort zone. I needed to return the favor for the help we received."

Adrienne says she doesn't often hear God speaking directly to her, but He convinced her she should go by using a song played at just the right moment that encouraged her to get involved: 'Take this heart, Lord. I'll be Your vessel.' It was confirmation that gave her the courage to go.



Adrienne Lee

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR

First | Worship releases their newest worship project on Sun, Nov 18, *What A Beautiful Savior*, with 11 original songs written by our team at Houston's First.

We pray you find freedom as these songs pour into your soul — freedom to sing, to express, and to cry out to Jesus with all your heart, soul, and strength.



CornerBooks

Available on iTunes

OCTOBER MOMENTS



Women from every campus gather for Refuge, a churchwide women's retreat



The HUB Students conquer indoor dodgeball at the Cypress Campus



Sienna Campus welcomes the community at Trunk-or-Treat



Adoptive and foster families celebrate 10 years of Legacy685



Men from Español Campus attend SBTC's Hombres de Impacto conference



The Choir & Orchestra from The Loop lead worship at the Downtown Campus

WHERE WILL YOU GO?

In 2019, Houston's First will send 30 short-term mission trips to 17 nations on five continents. More than 3,500 people from our church participated in trips just like these in 2018—people just like you. On what trip(s) will God call you to go, support financially, or pray for in the year ahead? The list of 2019 trips will be revealed on Sun, Nov 11.

Visit HoustonFirst.org to discover where we're going—and how to take the next step toward joining a team!



MINISTRY IMPACT OF HOUSTON'S FIRST YEAR-TO-DATE • JULY 1, 2018–OCT 28, 2018

DECISIONS

214 New Church Members
27 Joined by Baptism

13% of New Members were Baptized

ATTENDANCE

93,231 in Life Bible Studies (5,180 weekly average)
89,168 in Worship Services (4,954 weekly average)
15,315 on Webcast (851 weekly average)

MISSIONS

19 Mission Trips with
2,059 Team Members



GENEROSITY

3,936 Givers to Great Commission Fund
344 First-Time Givers

8% of Givers gave for the first time

Celebration

More than just musical entertainment, *Celebration* is a ministry whose heart is to encourage people in their faith and to introduce others to the Gospel. Reimagined this year with more than a dozen new songs, new staging, and other surprises, *Celebration* provides a unique way to celebrate Christmas and to invite people to Houston's First. So, who will you bring to experience *Celebration* this year?

TICKETS AVAILABLE
TheFirstChristmas.org
or 1.866.200.9569

SEVEN PRESENTATIONS

Thu, Dec 6 7:30p	Fri, Dec 7 7:30p	Sat, Dec 8 10a • 2:30p • 7:30p	Sun, Dec 9 2:30p • 7:30p
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CHRISTMAS EVE

MON, DEC 24

PREPARE YOUR HEART TO CELEBRATE
JESUS' BIRTH AT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
AT EACH OF OUR CAMPUSES

THE LOOP @ 2P • 4P • 6P
CYPRESS @ 2P • 4P • 6P
DOWNTOWN @ 4P

ESPAÑOL @ 4P
SIENNA @ 2P • 4P • 6P

ALL CAMPUSES

HIGHPOINT BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays @ 11:30a–12:40p
1010 Lamar (Suite 1250)

This weekly downtown Bible study is open to everyone! Upcoming speakers include Executive Pastor Dr. David Self (Nov 7, 28), Adults Minister Tim Young from The Loop Campus (Nov 14), and Sienna Campus Pastor Malcolm Marshall (Dec 5). HighPoint will not meet on Nov 21 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Lunch is available for purchase for \$5, or feel free to bring yours with you.
CONTACT: Diane.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

SUMMIT NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Mon, Dec 31 @ 9p–1a — Julia Ideson Building

Young single adults will celebrate the new year with hope and optimism for what God has in store! Gather with friends—new and old—for a fun-filled evening to be enjoyed and remembered at our New Year's Eve party in the historic Julia Ideson Building in downtown Houston. Registration opens Sun, Nov 18, at HoustonsFirst.org.
CONTACT: Kristy.Nguyen@HoustonsFirst.org

THE LOOP CAMPUS

MEDICAL MISSIONS LUNCH

Sun, Nov 11 @ 12:30–2p — The Loop Campus (Rm 143)

There are many opportunities to impact our local community as well as communities around the world by using our medical training. At this free lunch with speakers Terri & Eugene Toy, we'll look at short-term opportunities through Houston's First. RSVP at HoustonsFirst.org.
CONTACT: Ameer.Omar@HoustonsFirst.org

CANHOPE

Mon, Nov 12 @ 6–8p — The Loop Campus (Reception Rm)

Ministering to families and friends touched by cancer, CanHope gathers on the second Monday of each month for dinner and prayer. Bring a salad, vegetable, or fruit to share and we'll provide the entree. Come and enjoy a time of testimony, prayer, and fellowship. Everyone is welcome! Please RSVP to 713.957.6764.
CONTACT: Sherry.Oradat@HoustonsFirst.org

FIRST H.O.P.E. JOB TRAINING

Sat, Nov 17 @ 9a–3p — The Loop Campus (Rm 262)

Helping other procure employment, First H.O.P.E. offers a variety of resources to those seeking a job or to change their current one. At this month's meeting, John Yambao will give a career search seminar. Seating limited so register early at HoustonsFirst.org.
CONTACT: Bob.Stroud@HoustonsFirst.org

THE CHRISTMAS STORE COLLECTION DAY

Sun, Nov 18 — The Loop Campus (Main Foyer)

At The Christmas Store at our Faith Center — Spring Branch in December, families from our ministry partners are invited to "shop" for gifts for their family members. Where do those gifts come from? YOU! The Houston's First family is asked to bring a new, unwrapped gift to the Main Foyer on Collection Day so we can stock the store for our guests. Visit HoustonsFirst.org for gift ideas, and listen for details from your Life Bible Study about the gender and age group you've been assigned.
CONTACT: Claudia.Reyes@HoustonsFirst.org

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD BOX COLLECTION DAY

Sun, Nov 18 — The Loop Campus (Connection Ctr)

It's that time of year for our annual partnership with Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse! Stop by the Connection Center to pick up a shoe box, fill it with gifts donated by you, and drop it off by Sun, Nov 18. Your shoe box will be one of the many that bless children all over the world this Christmas.

CONTACT: Jolie.Garcia@HoustonsFirst.org

CYPRESS CAMPUS

CHRISTMAS AT THE MANSIONS

Donations accepted Nov 11–Dec 4

We are partnering again with the Mansions at Hastings Green to provide Christmas cheer! Beginning Sun, Nov 11, pick up an envelope with a child's name and commit to purchasing gifts for that specific child. Here are three other ways to be involved this year:

- Donate a gift or make a monetary donation for gifts or gift cards for families
- Attend the party on Thu, Dec 13 @ 5–7p at the Mansions
- Pray throughout this season as we spread the Gospel and the love of Jesus

Visit HoustonsFirst.org for additional information, or contact Debbie Spence for other ways to be involved.

CONTACT: Debbie.Spence@HoustonsFirst.org

SWEET ESCAPE

Tue, Nov 27 @ 9:30–11:30a — Cypress Campus

As the holiday season approaches, take a break with the Women's Ministry and enjoy a sweet escape! Laugh a little as we hear from Zac & Nicole Hufft reflect on holidays past and enjoy fellowship while Bethany Bechtold walks us through decorating a homemade Christmas treat. Childcare is provided. Registration is required to reserve materials at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Teal.Moran@HoustonsFirst.org

NIGHT OF HOPE TOUR

Sat, Dec 15 @ 7p — Cypress Campus

The Cypress Campus looks forward to hosting our first concert event when Nathan & Christy Nockels bring the Night of Hope Tour: A Family Christmas to our worship center. The evening includes Nathan & Christy, family members, and special guest Molley Moody. Tickets are on sale now at HoustonsFirst.org.
CONTACT: Dana.Haddad@HoustonsFirst.org

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

MISSIONS MONTH

For the month of November, the Downtown Campus is highlighting our ministry partners in the city, across the nation, and around the world. Each Sunday, we'll have an opportunity for you to connect with our partners, sign up to serve or go on a trip, and take ownership of the Great Commission. For a list of our current partners, please visit HoustonsFirst.org.

FRIENDSGIVING

Sun, Nov 18 @ 7p — Downtown Campus (Rm 219)

As Thanksgiving approaches, the College Ministry wants to come together to celebrate the season and express gratitude for our friendships, and most importantly for God! This will be a potluck Thanksgiving meal—we'll provide the turkey, you provide the delicious sides and desserts.

CONTACT: Jarret.Garber@HoustonsFirst.org

ESPAÑOL CAMPUS

THANKSGIVING LUNCH

Sun, Nov 18 @ 10a–1p — The Loop Campus (Chapel)

We want to celebrate God's grace in a service full of worship, testimonies of God's goodness, and fellowship as we enjoy each other's company over a delicious meal. There is nothing better than God's presence, great company, and good food! If you know someone that speaks Spanish, let them know about this gathering. Registration is not required.

CONTACT: Douglas.Hernandez@HoustonsFirst.org

SIENNA CAMPUS

CELEBRATE HOPE

Tue, Nov 13 @ 6–8:30p
Sienna Campus (Worship Ctr)

Ladies, join us as we make wreaths to benefit Star of Hope. Please bring two rolls of good quality wired ribbon (minimum 2" width), scissors, glue gun (if you have one), and ornaments. Register at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Kelli.Boylan@HoustonsFirst.org

THANKSGIVING FEAST

Sun, Nov 18 @ 4–7p — Baines Middle School

We will celebrate our DIFFERENCEMAKERS and all that the Lord has done for the Sienna Campus! Turkey is provided by the church, so sign up in your Life Bible Study to bring sides or a dessert.
CONTACT: Kelli.Boylan@HoustonsFirst.org

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

Text HFBCAPP to 41411
for links to download the Houston's First Baptist Church app for iOS or Android

Available on the Google play
Available on the App Store

WHERE YOU'LL FIND US

Houston's First Baptist Church has numerous locations around town. But with members from all across the greater Houston area living out their faith and making a difference in their homes, schools, and offices, the church's ministry extends far beyond the addresses listed below!

THE LOOP CAMPUS 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024



Gregg Matte, Pastor

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

CYPRESS CAMPUS 11011 Mason Rd, Cypress, TX 77433 (Next to Bridgeland High School)



Jason Swiggart, Campus Pastor

[f](#) HoustonsFirstCypress [t](#) @HFBCcypress [i](#) @HFBCcypress

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS 1730 Jefferson, Houston, TX 77003



Lee Hsia, Campus Pastor

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

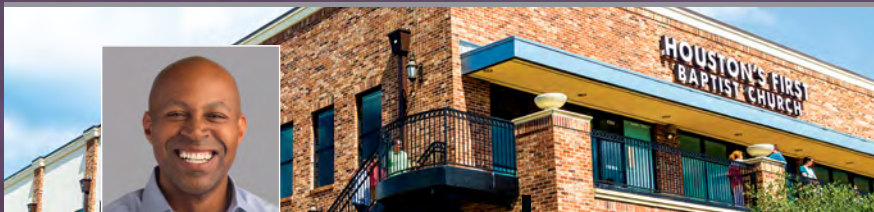
ESPAÑOL CAMPUS 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024



Juan Alaniz, Campus Pastor

[f](#) HoustonsFirstEspañol [t](#) @HFBCEspañol [i](#) @HFBCEspañol

SIENNA CAMPUS 4309 Sienna Parkway, Missouri City, TX 77459



Malcolm Marshall, Campus Pastor

[f](#) HoustonsFirstSienna [t](#) @HFBCSienna [i](#) @HFBCSienna

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).

RELEVANT

Having the passion, desire and ability to build necessary bridges to move people from culture to Christ.

BIBLICAL

Fully embracing the beliefs and values revealed in the Bible as true, eternal and life-changing.

COMMUNITY

Providing a place to be authentic, involved, impacted and impactful.

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 our church or by a body of believers of like faith and practice. If you have not already done so, we can assist you with these decisions. 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.

For more information about Houston's First, call 713.681.8000 or visit HoustonsFirst.org.

SUNDAYS AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

The Loop Campus

Worship 9:15a • 11a • 5p

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

Cypress Campus

Worship 9:30a • 11a

Life Bible Studies 8a • 9:30a • 11a

Downtown Campus

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

Español Campus

Worship 9:15a

Life Bible Studies 10:45a

Sienna Campus

Worship 9:30a • 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a • 11a