

dec 2018

welcome.

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

2 | from isolation to community

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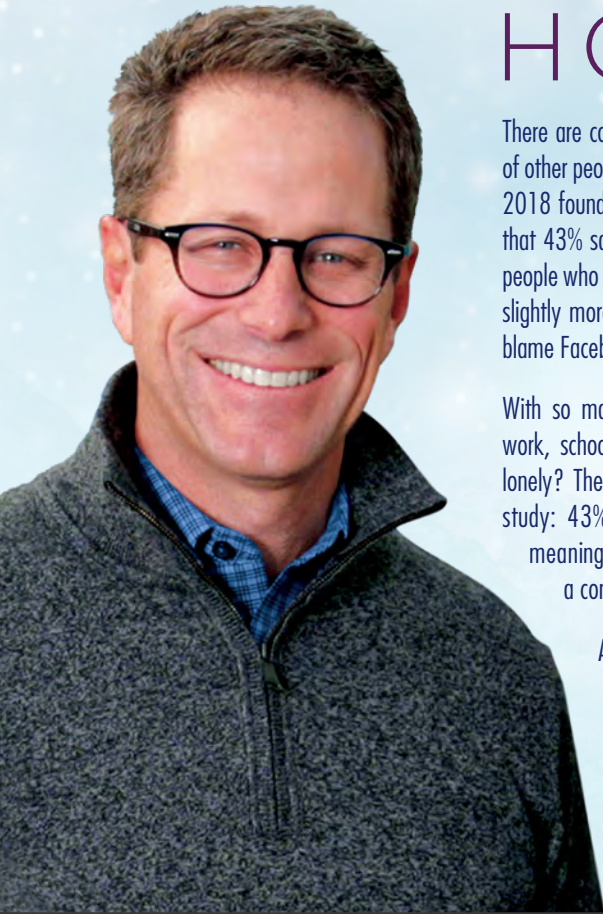
6 | where you'll find us



HOUSTON'S FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH

HOUSTONSFIRST.ORG

Welcome to HOUSTON'S FIRST!



There are countless opportunities for us to be in the company of other people. However, Americans are lonely. A study in May 2018 found that 46% of Americans report feeling alone, and that 43% say that they are isolated from others. Surprisingly, people who are heavy users of social media only reported being slightly more lonely than those who never use it. We cannot blame Facebook for the problem!

With so many options to connect with others—at church, work, school, civic groups, and more—how are people so lonely? The answer might be found in another result of that study: 43% of Americans say their relationships are not meaningful. Proximity to people is not the same as having a connection with them.

As you read this, you might be at one of our campuses surrounded by people. You're close in proximity and may know many acquaintances or familiar faces, but are you close to anyone on a personal level? Many at Houston's First have found meaningful community and relationships

through our Life Bible Studies. These smaller groups provide a place where you can be known and get to know others. It's where encouragement is given, victories are celebrated, and losses are grieved. In many ways, it's where the church is the church!

If you're already connected with a Life Bible Study, invite somebody to come with you. If you're not in a Life Bible Study already, ask a Guest Experience Team member or staff member at your campus for assistance with finding one. Let's move beyond casual "How are you?" greetings to sincere "No really, how are you?"

In Him,

Pastor Gregg

Pastor Gregg Matte

Be Together.



The Christmas season can magnify feelings of loneliness as we miss people no longer with us or we hold out for the ideal "Hallmark" version of reality that never materializes. Therefore, our InnerChange focus in December challenges us to be intentional about moving from isolation toward community—toward being together with others.

Here are some ways to take that next step, each one designed to break down barriers and provide an opportunity to make connections. Consider these or follow your own ideas. While you get to know people, you just might provide somebody with a connection they've been longing for, too. It may be a gift that keeps on giving throughout the year!

- Make A Difference — round up people to serve together at our Food Pantry & Clothes Closet or at any local charity near you
- Food Get-Togethers — host a small group of people for a meal, especially if they are new to our church or your neighborhood
- Give The Gift of Music — invite people to *Celebration* at The Loop (Dec 6–9) or the Night of Hope Tour at Cypress (Sat, Dec 15)

Here's how our youngest Houston's First family members can focus on building community:

- Preschoolers — draw a picture of your friends and pray for them each day
- Children — with a parent, deliver homemade Christmas treats or crafts to your neighbors
- Students — invite a classmate from school to an upcoming HUB Student Ministry event

People I can reach out to this December:



Find more ideas for finding community — and share your own — at HoustonFirst.org



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

fitting TOGETHER

In a jigsaw puzzle, individual pieces of different shapes, sizes, and colors fit together to form a single image. The same can be said about the members of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:3–8), and about our Life Bible Studies at Houston’s First, too. Within each class, people from various backgrounds, life experiences, and stages of life connect with each other to create a beautiful picture that reflects Jesus to each other and the world.

We asked people to share about their Life Bible Study experiences, and here’s what they had to say. What would you say about your Life Bible Study? Text LIFEBIBLESTUDY to 41411 for a link to let us know!

What role does your Life Bible Study community play in your life?

✿ “It provides a place to belong. We are new to the area and have been welcomed and enveloped with love from this group. When you’re new to a place, it’s nice to know someone knows your name.”

– Jim Drake

✿ “As a single person, without family nearby, the ladies in my Life Bible Study are my family.”

– Debbie Thompson

✿ “Our time together helps to fine tune my beliefs and validate my biblical world view. The experience is so encouraging and uplifting and provides spiritual nourishment each week.”

– Rich Whittington

What do you like the most about your Life Bible Study?

✿ “It is like family. We pray for each other and share joys and sorrows while digging into God’s Word and applying it to our daily lives. It is a group which I trust with the very baring of my soul.”

– Jill McCleary

✿ “A new marriage can be challenging. In our Life Bible Study, my husband and I have learned from other mentor couples, made wonderful newlywed friends, and have gained a valuable Christian support network as we journey in marriage.”

– Debra Haney

Without my Life Bible Study, my life would be...

✿ “More difficult. Without support from our extended family, we would be trying to be standalone Christians when God wants us to be a part of His family. Life would seem strange and less fulfilling.”

– Johnny Harper

✿ “Incomplete. My cancer battle would have been scary without my Life Bible Study prayer warriors. I should not be alive today, but my fellow believers helped me survive and stay with them, serving them each week.”

– Randy Smith

What advice would you give somebody who is not in a Life Bible Study?

✿ “Just take that step and go into some of the classes and try them out. Don’t give up. If you don’t like the first one you try, try a different one! It’s so worth it!”

– Celise Hamann

where do you fit in?

Unlike jigsaw puzzles, our Life Bible Studies always have room to add another piece! If you have not already found community in a Life Bible Study at your campus, we encourage you to find one. Visit HoustonFirst.org or text LIFEBIBLESTUDY to 41411 to explore the options, or ask a staff member or Guest Experience Team member at your campus for assistance with finding a Life Bible Study.

MINISTRY IMPACT OF HOUSTON’S FIRST YEAR-TO-DATE • JULY 1, 2018–NOV 25, 2018

DECISIONS

289 New Church Members
31 Joined by Baptism

11% of New Members were Baptized

ATTENDANCE

108,844 in Life Bible Studies
(5,183 weekly average)
107,286 in Worship Services
(4,877 weekly average)
18,895 on Webcast
(859 weekly average)

MISSIONS

21 Mission Trips with
2,066 Team Members



GENEROSITY

4,089 Givers to
Great Commission Fund
398 First-Time Givers

9% of Givers Gave for First Time

Making a list and checking it twice?

Whether they've been naughty or nice, treat people in your life with gifts from CornerBooks—including First Worship's new album *What A Beautiful Savior*, and our 2019 churchwide devotional *Wisdom For Each Day* by Billy Graham. You'll also find a wide selection of books, Bibles, journals, CDs, coffee, and more.



CornerBooks

november moments



Summit Young Singles round up for the 21st annual "Under The Texas Sky" hoedown



The HUB Students at The Loop Campus gobble up fun at Turkey Bowl at Warrior Field



Cypress Campus hosts a live TV taping with author and teacher Beth Moore



College women at the Downtown Campus collect Operation Christmas Child boxes



Español Campus hosts a special Thanksgiving worship service and luncheon



Sienna Campus women gather to make wreaths for Star of Hope

MAKING A YEAR-END CONTRIBUTION

Houston's First is able to minister to people in our city, our nation, and our world thanks to the ongoing generosity of our church family. Whether you give on a regular basis or have never taken that step of sharing your financial resources, we invite you to make a year-end contribution and be a part of preparing us for whatever opportunities God brings in 2019!

For 2018 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.



1

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 Mon, Dec 31.



2

On mobile: Contributions submitted on a mobile device must be made before midnight (Central) on Mon, Dec 31. To make a mobile contribution, go to the Houston's First Baptist Church app, select your campus, and use the GIVE option. (Text HFBCAPP to 41411 for a link to download the app for iOS or Android.)




3

In person: Contributions can be submitted during the offering moment in the worship services at every campus throughout December. If not submitted in person then, contributions must be brought to the church's Financial Services office by no later than 4:30p on Mon, Dec 31. The office is located at The Loop Campus at 7401 Katy Freeway and is open Mon–Fri from 8a–4:30p, including Mon, Dec 31.



4

By mail: The postmark date on the envelope must be before Jan 1, 2019. Contributions should be mailed to Houston's First Baptist Church, 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, Texas 77024.



Celebration encourages people in their faith and introduces others to the Gospel—providing a unique and spectacular way to celebrate Christmas and to invite people to Houston's First. Who will you bring to experience this musical presentation of the message of Christmas?

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! Speakers this month include are Sienna Campus Pastor Malcolm Marshall (Dec 5) and Executive Pastor Dr. David Self (Dec 12). Lunch is available for purchase for \$5, or feel free to bring yours with you. HighPoint will not meet Dec 19–Jan 2 due to the Christmas holiday, but will begin again on Jan 9.

CONTACT: Diane.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org

SUMMIT NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY
Mon, Dec 31 @ 9p–1a — Julia Ideson Building

Young single adults (20s & 30s) 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. Purchase your ticket soon at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Kristy.Nguyen@HoustonsFirst.org

IMPACT NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY
Mon, Dec 31 @ 9p–1a — Hunt Retreat

Singles in their late 30s, 40s, or 50s will ring in 2019 with an evening of mystery and fun! Come as a flapper, a gangster, a silent screen star—or just as you are! We'll have an interactive mystery game run by Robb Brunson from InterActive Theater Company, professional DJ/karaoke, escape room, hors d'oeuvres, games, music, and more. Come for the evening or stay the night. Rooms are available, but space is limited, so reserve your spot before they are gone at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Chris.Heitman@HoustonsFirst.org

MIDNIGHT MADNESS
Fri, Jan 25 @ 5:30p–Midnight — The Loop Campus

Life Bible Studies are a vital part of Houston's First. We invest in our Life Bible Study leaders—or heroes—so they are equipped to fulfill their roles. Current and prospective Life Bible Study leaders from each campus will gather for this annual equipping event for great training, inspiring vision, fantastic giveaways, interactive fun—and food, of course! Learn more about it at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Debbie.Thompson@HoustonsFirst.org

NIGHT TO SHINE
Fri, Feb 8 @ 6–9p — The Loop Campus

Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs ages 14 and older. Houston's First and our Thru The Roof Special Needs Ministry are excited to be a part of this global effort sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Visit HoustonsFirst.org or text SHINE to 41411 for info about registration and how to volunteer, too.

CONTACT: Daniel.Williams@HoustonsFirst.org

the loop campus

CANHOPE
Mon, Dec 10 @ 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

SPRING PREVIEW NIGHT
Wed, Jan 16 @ 5:45–8p — The Loop Campus

Enjoy a free concert with Shane & Shane at 6:45p in the Worship Center after you visit the Milestones Expo from 5:45–6:30p in the Main Foyer. At the Expo, discover what Milestones classes are offered this semester on Wednesday nights during MidLink and other days of the week. Come earlier for dinner in the Café from 4:45–6:15p!

CONTACT: Jenny.Sheets@HoustonsFirst.org

THE TABLE
Tuesdays, Jan 29–Mar 5 @ 6:30p
The Loop Campus (Chapel)

For six weeks, women are invited for an evening of worship and an encouraging word from a different speaker each week as we gather once again at The Table. Who could you bring and introduce to your friends, our church, and—most importantly—Jesus? We'll save them a seat at The Table!

CONTACT: Heather.Connolly@HoustonsFirst.org

cypress campus

CHRISTMAS AT THE MANSIONS
Thu, Dec 13 @ 5–7p — Mansions at Hastings Green

We are partnering again with the Mansions at Hastings Green to provide Christmas cheer for many of their residents. If you chose a child's name in November, please bring your gift by Tue, Dec 4. If you would like to provide snacks for the party, see your Life Bible Study leader. No RSVP for the party is required!

CONTACT: Debbie.Spence@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

HUB WEEKEND
Jan 18–20

HUB Weekend is a time for our Cypress Campus students (6th–12th grades) and their friends to steal away at the start of the spring semester to rest, build community, serve our city, and grow in their relationship with Christ. Visit HoustonsFirst.org for details and to register your student soon!

CONTACT: Lindsay.Crisanti@HoustonsFirst.org

downtown campus

COLLEGE MINISTRY CHRISTMAS PARTY!
Fri, Dec 7 @ 7–9p — Downtown Campus

The College Ministry is celebrating Christmas together before the end of the semester with an epic Christmas party! It's going to be an ugly sweater, white elephant, ornament making kind of night! We'll also watch everyone's favorite Christmas movie: FROZEN! Dinner is provided and no RSVP required. Bring a friend or two to tag along!

CONTACT: Jarret.Garber@HoustonsFirst.org

MENS' HUDDLE: UH MEN'S BASKETBALL GAME
Sat, Jan 12 @ 7p — UH Fertitta Center

Men from the Downtown Campus are headed to the University of Houston's new Fertitta Center to watch the Cougars on the hardwood. The cost is \$10 per person, and you can register online at HoustonsFirst.org.

CONTACT: Peter.Lee@HoustonsFirst.org

español campus

THE CHRISTMAS STORE
Sun, Dec 16 @ 10a — The Loop Campus (Chapel)

Gather with the Español Campus as we have the opportunity to bless many families who have registered to receive Christmas gifts for their children. Gifts will be given after our 9:15a worship service.

Questions? Contact Douglas Hernandez.

CONTACT: Douglas.Hernandez@HoustonsFirst.org

sienna campus

FIRST KIDS FAMILY GAME NIGHT
Fri, Jan 4 @ 6–8p — Sienna Campus (Worship Center)

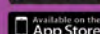
Families of 1st–5th graders are invited to an evening of games, snacks, and laughs as we get to know one another around some good old-fashioned board games! No RSVP is required, and you don't need to bring a thing except for your family! (Note: This event was rescheduled from Sun, Dec 30.)

CONTACT: Tyler.Scott@HoustonsFirst.org

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



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

Available on the  

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

 HoustonsFirst  @HoustonsFirst  @HoustonsFirst

cypress campus 11011 Mason Rd, Cypress, TX 77433 (Next to Bridgeland High School)



Jason Swiggart, Campus Pastor

 HoustonsFirstCypress  @HFBCcypress  @HFBCcypress

downtown campus 1730 Jefferson, Houston, TX 77003



Lee Hsia, Campus Pastor

 HFBCDowntown  @HFBCDowntown  @HFBCDowntown

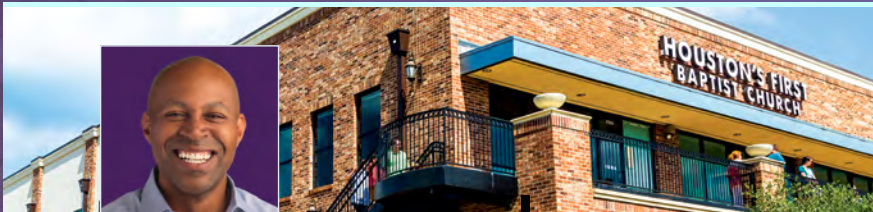
español campus 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024



Juan Alaniz, Campus Pastor

 HoustonsFirstEspañol  @HFBCEspañol  @HFBCEspañol

sienna campus 4309 Sienna Parkway, Missouri City, TX 77459



Malcolm Marshall, Campus Pastor

 HoustonsFirstSienna  @HFBCSienna  @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 or text **LIFEBIBLESTUDY** to 41411 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