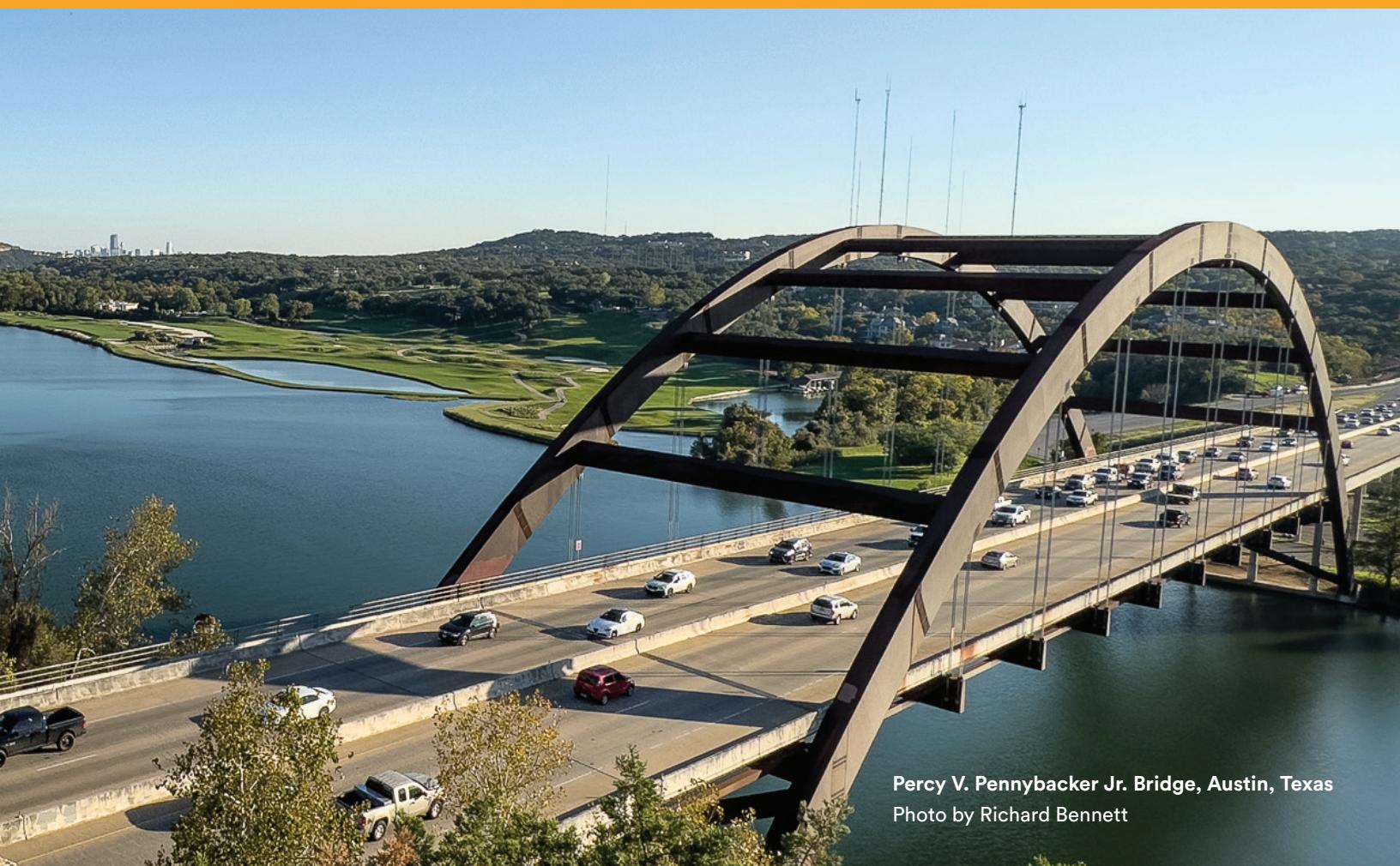


The BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION OF AUSTIN BAPTIST CHURCH



Percy V. Pennybacker Jr. Bridge, Austin, Texas
Photo by Richard Bennett

VOL. 19 NO. 4

JANUARY 28, 2026



**AUSTIN BAPTIST
CHURCH**

LET THERE BE LIGHT

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A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

ABC Family,

I hope you stayed warm and safe during this recent winter storm. I'm grateful the power outages were minimal around our city, and I am thankful we were still able to meet remotely on Sunday. I do want to thank our Director of Media Ministries, Stephen Vaughn, for making it possible. Stephen put many unseen hours into recording, editing, and producing those online worship services. Because of his effort, we were able to worship together from our living rooms on an icy weekend.

Weekends like this past Sunday remind us of the power of media ministries. Technological resources provide the necessary tools to extend the message of Jesus Christ beyond our church walls. They help us connect with church members who are unable to gather, and they help us connect with people who have yet to walk through our church doors. I'm excited we are about to upgrade these critical resources through your continued generosity to *Light The Way*.

In the next few months, our media partner, Paragon 360, will be installing brand new cameras, broadcasting systems, and worship center video screens. These resources will provide necessary updates to 15+ year old equipment, but even more importantly, they will give us upgraded tools to connect with people beyond our church doors. After this Phase 1 of media upgrades is installed, we will press on to Phase 2 which includes new lighting and security upgrades to our campus.

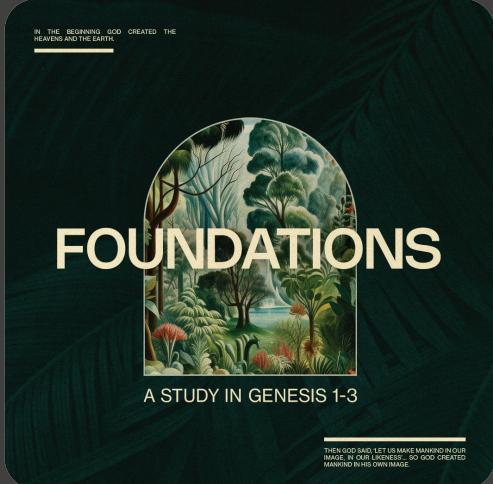
Thank you for your continued partnership in this effort. Through *Light The Way*, we have now eliminated our debt, and we will continue to expand our mission, and extend the message of Jesus Christ in the days to come. We are approximately \$400k from fully funding all *Light The Way* objectives. So I encourage you to continue to give your tithes and offerings to the general fund, The Great Commission Fund, and consider giving above and beyond to *Light The Way* as God leads you. Together, we will light the way forward at ABC for years to come.

Invite a friend to come experience ABC this weekend! One simple invitation has the potential to change a life. I look forward to seeing you back on campus this Sunday at 8:45am or 11:15am.

Onward and Upward,

DR. JONATHAN SPENCER
SENIOR PASTOR





CURRENT SERIES

Foundations

A study in Genesis 1-3

GOT GENESIS QUESTIONS?

Submit your questions for Citizen ATX Podcast by scanning or clicking the QR code! New episodes every Wednesday.



DEACONS ON CALL

FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 26, 2025



Tom Howell
512-248-9896



Brian McCray
469-693-2986

UPCOMING EVENTS



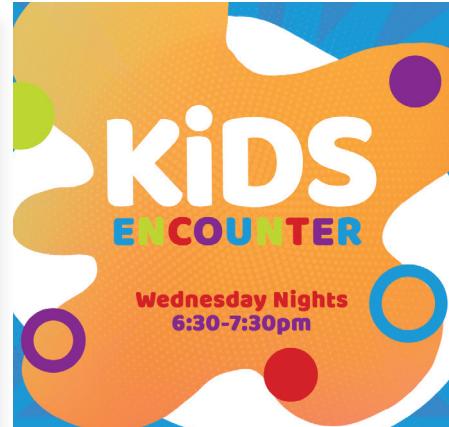
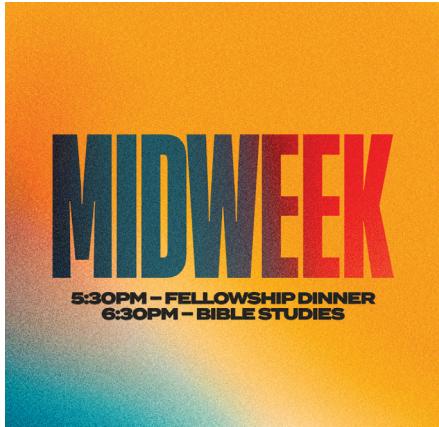
ABC WOMEN'S RETREAT

February 6-7, 2026
Vintage Villas
Austin, TX



For all event and weekly activity information, please visit
austinbaptistchurch.com/EVENTS

WEEKLY REMINDERS



MIDWEEK MENU

NEXT WEEK'S MENU
FEBRUARY 4

COST: \$10 per person;
\$5 for kids' meal (12 & under)

Pork chop, baked sweet potato,
mac n' cheese, bread roll, and salad bar

Please note that Midweek dinner is served in the Café.
Seating for dinner is in the Great Hall until 6:30pm.



You are invited to attend (audit) one (or more) of the following mini-mester classes with Dallas Theological Seminary being hosted here at ABC this spring. **Contact Lisa Campbell at lisac@austinbaptistchurch.com if you are interested.**

BE5104 OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS | FEB. 5-7 (TH 6-8:30, FRI 8-5, SAT 8-3)

DR. CHARLES SAVELLE

An exposition of the preexilic, exilic, and postexilic prophets (Isaiah through Malachi), excluding Jonah but including Lamentations, with emphasis on the biblical theology of these books, their genre, and application.

EML5332 ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT | FEB. 12-14 (TH 6-8:30, FRI 8-5, SAT 8-3)

DR. KEVIN GANDY

This course will provide strategies and practices to help leaders understand the complexities of organizational culture, including how to create, discover, and form/transform their organizational culture. Attention will be given to best practices for practical leadership in a variety of organizational contexts and environments.



From June 30 to July 6, families from Austin Baptist Church will have an amazing and unique opportunity to partner with the Arabic Baptist Church of Boston, Massachusetts as they host their annual conference for Arabic-speaking Christians from all over the Northeast.

What we will do:

- Run VBS-style activities and programming for the children of conference attendees, ages birth through 8th grade
- Assist with the media production team for the main adult conference
- Engage with the families, walking alongside them in worship and fellowship

To learn more, come to the **Interest Meeting** in the Student Ministry Suite on Sunday, February 1st, after the 11:15am service.

For more information, visit austinbaptistchurch.com/boston

WHO CAN GO ON THIS MISSION TRIP?

Everyone! 6th grade and older will serve by leading groups, and younger children can participate in their age level VBS.

INTEREST MEETING INFO

February 1st in the Student Ministry Suite (immediately after 11:15am service).

WHEN CAN I APPLY?

Applications will open after the meeting. Space is limited, so please let us know quickly that you are interested!

CONTACT

Lynn Wood

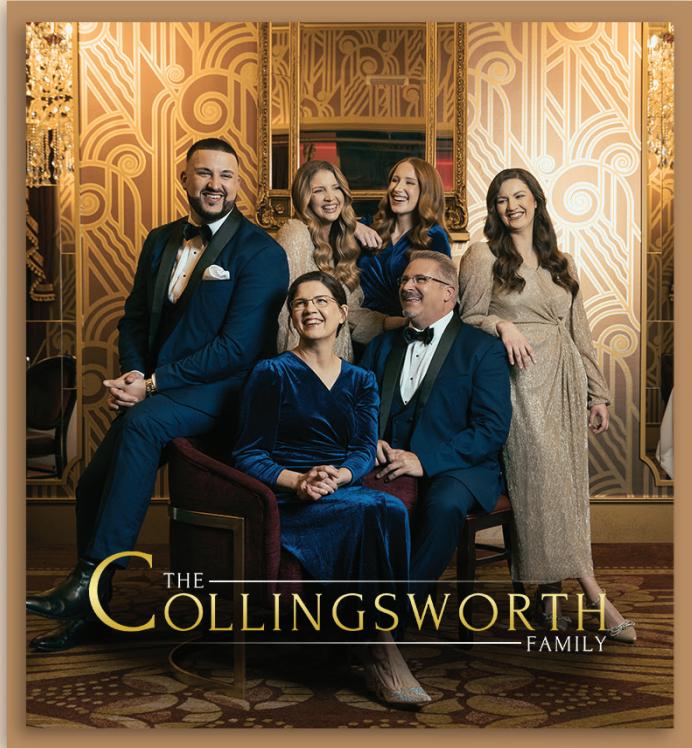
lynnw@austinbaptistchurch.com

STUDENTS FOR HIRE!

If you have some extra work that needs to be done, our students are looking for ways to raise money for this year's Student Ministry Spring Break Mission Trip to Guatemala!

If you'd like to help support this mission and offer a student some work as a scholarship, please reach out to:

Corbin Smith
corbins@austinbaptistchurch.com



THE COLLINGSWORTH FAMILY PRESENTS
CLASSICS & HYMNS
SPRING TOUR 2026

AUSTIN, TX

AUSTIN BAPTIST CHURCH
7016 RIBELIN RANCH DR AUSTIN, TX 78750

THURSDAY,
FEB 26, 2026

CONCERT AT 7PM
AGES 14 AND UNDER ARE FREE

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!
ITICKETS
OFFICIAL TICKET PROVIDER



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We are excited to host The Collingsworth Family for their CLASSICS & HYMNS Spring Tour at ABC on Thursday, February 26th!

We are in need of volunteers to assist on that day. All volunteers will receive a FREE TICKET to the show! You can sign up to serve [HERE](#).



ABC Women's Ministry

WHERE EVERYONE HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Opportunities to Serve and Connect in Women's Ministry!

This past fall, our Women's Ministry launched two new ministries: Embrace Grace and C.O.R.D. (Connecting Others Relationally through Discipleship). Embrace Grace serves and discipiles single moms who have chosen life for their babies, while C.O.R.D. pairs an encourager with an encouragee for relational discipleship.

Both ministries have exceeded our expectations—all praise and glory to God! With that growth comes a need for additional help. To keep things streamlined, this article will focus on Embrace Grace and Embrace Life, where there are several opportunities for you to serve.

A Look at What God Is Doing

Embrace Grace will begin its next 12-week session on Wednesday, February 4, at 6:30 pm. To catch you up on our most recent group: five moms completed the program and all have since welcomed their babies—three boys and two girls! The bonds formed were so meaningful that beginning February 1st, these moms will transition into Embrace Life, where they will continue growing in their relationship with Christ, with one another, and with our church family.

CURRENT AREAS OF NEED

With two active groups, we now have an exciting need for additional volunteers!



Leader: Kelsey Dramberger
Co-Leaders: Gina Danks, Faith McCoppin
(Anticipating 6 new women this semester)

Co-Leaders:

Co-leaders join the moms for midweek dinner and participate in the Embrace Grace Bible study at 6:30 pm.

Responsibilities include:

- Writing down prayer requests and sharing them with the group
- Checking in with moms throughout the week
- Providing simple snacks (typically a pre-packaged breakfast item moms can take home)
- Keeping track of dinner tickets for moms (and children, if applicable).

No study preparation is required.

Baby Shower Planner:

This role involves organizing volunteers for food, set-up, and clean-up. Décor from the fall will be reused, and we already have a strong structure in place—we simply need someone to serve as the main point of communication and coordination.

“Me Day” Coordinator:

This is a special day of pampering for our moms. We have décor and a proven plan from last semester. We’re looking for a point person to organize, plan, and help implement this meaningful day.

Leader: Kelsey Dramberger
Co-Leaders: Gina Danks, Faith McCoppin
(Anticipating 6 new women this semester)

Meal Helpers:

Meal Helpers assist during Wednesday night dinners from 5:00–6:15 pm, helping care for children while moms get their meals. This is a simple yet impactful way to connect with the moms, and they are incredibly grateful for this support.

Meal Train:

One of the most tangible ways to bless our moms is by providing meals after the birth of their babies. In just the last few weeks, three of our moms have welcomed newborns. If you'd like to help, please consider signing up at the links below:

- [Meal Train for Toshana](#)
- [Meal Train for Grace](#)
- [Meal Train for Emma](#)

EMBRACE
life

Embrace Life is a new ministry led by **Julie Christianson**, with support already in place from **Dawn Crouch**, **Bethany Spencer**, and **Sue Brown**. If you're interested in serving moms as they continue their discipleship journey in this next season, Julie would love to connect with you.

If any of these opportunities resonate with you, please pray about where God might be leading you to serve, and reach out to us:

- **Anita McGinnis:** anitam@austinbaptistchurch.com
- **Kelsey Dramberger:** kelseydramberger@gmail.com
- **Julie Christianson:** julieachristianson69@gmail.com

It's hard to put into words what this ministry has meant to me and to our team. We often step into ministry wanting to serve, encourage, and teach—yet we are the ones who walk away changed. I'll be honest, if we had fully known what this would require, we might have run the other way. But God knew exactly what He was doing when He placed this ministry on our hearts.

This isn't a "one and done" kind of ministry. It's a one, plus another, that leaves you beautifully undone as you witness God at work in the lives of these moms and their families.

SAVE THE DATE FOR
Twilight Tea
MARCH 8, 2026



From the Pages of Bill's Notebook

What will you do with today's tabula rasa (blank slate)? In my early 20s I had the privilege of working as a lifeguard at the University of Tennessee Faculty Club pool with a hilarious young man named Henry Cho. He is a Korean American with an East Tennessee accent who now writes and performs clean comedy. His humor brightened our days. During breaks from the guard stand, he and another guard would freestyle their hilarious comedy that left us all in stitches. The other guard surprisingly went on to become a Secret Service agent (though I don't know for whom or where he was a Secret Service agent because, it was, of course... secret).

Henry was funny, so much so that he eventually opened for Jerry Seinfeld. (Caution: rabbit trail!) Seinfeld is known for the Seinfeld method for becoming better at anything. He says he takes a clean calendar and for every day that he writes some funny material, he makes an X on that day. He says if you want to improve at something, do it every day, make an X and don't have any blank spots on the calendar. In my office a few years ago, I had an ornate blank calendar that was given to me by a Chinese Pastor, Joshua Li. When I saw it, I was reminded to pray for his family and his congregation. I also used it to remind me to continue doing the things that are important in my life, kind of like the Seinfeld method. So, on my calendar, I made a different colored X for the most important things in my life. There was an X for my devoted time with God, there was a different colored X that I would draw if I had served my wife that day, there was another colored X if I exercised, there was an X if I wrote an article or lesson, an X if I read something life-changing, an X if I helped disciple someone in faith, an X if I connected with a new or old friend, and so on. So, when I had actually done those activities that helped change my life, my calendar looked like a multicolored chain. Some days I only got a few Xs, but the blank spots helped motivate me to fill them all the next week.

Jesus tells us, in Luke 9:23, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." So, hopefully on the tabula rasa of our calendar that we get to make an X for those things that make us more like followers of Jesus!

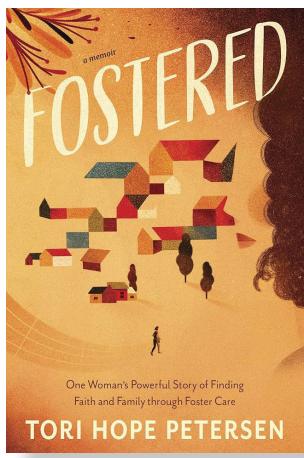
Hang in there people! God is glad to be with us! I'm praying for us all!

In His Joy,
BILL MCGINNIS
PASTOR OF CARE





ABC Library



Fostered: One Woman's Powerful Story of Finding Faith and Family Through Foster Care by Tori Hope Petersen

Tori Hope Petersen came from a dysfunctional, abusive family and was eventually put in foster care. ***Fostered*** is a memoir of Petersen's childhood and her experiences in the foster care system. Petersen, with the help and influence of some special people in her life, eventually became a Christian. In 2021, she won the Mrs. Universe pageant. She has written one other book, ***Breaking the Patterns Before They Break You: Healing from the Pain of Your Past and Finding Real Hope That Lasts***. She is passionate about foster care reform and is an adoption advocate. Petersen is a sought after national speaker as she shares her powerful story.

Petersen is biracial. Her mother suffered with mental illness and was physically and mentally abusive. Petersen was also abused by others that her mother let into her life. She lived in twelve different foster care homes after she entered the system. Despite all the setbacks she experienced and doubts that she would even be able to go to college, she succeeded and even became an All-American Track and Field star. ***Fostered*** is Petersen's raw, unfiltered story. The book is not written in chronological order, but each of the nineteen chapters covers a theme such as Created, Ignored, Sacrificed, Abused, Freed, and Loved. This will not be an easy book for some people to read. Petersen shares her disappointments, feelings of not being loved, her uncertainties, and her spiritual struggle in a real way. She overcame negative stereotypes and attacks on her identity when she placed her faith in Jesus. Petersen began to have hope, a deep faith, a new purpose, and she was given a family who loved her. Her story will make you think about the spiritual adoption that God has given to us. This book will also help give more understanding of the foster system and what it means to be an orphan. It will touch your heart!

CONTACT: Rita Ervin

Email library@austinbaptistchurch.com

or visit us online at austinbaptistchurch.com/LIBRARY

LIBRARY HOURS

SUNDAYS - 9:45AM-11:15AM

WEDNESDAYS - 5:00PM-7:30PM

SUNDAY WORSHIP LIVESTREAM: austinbaptistchurch.com/WATCH

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP GROUPS: austinbaptistchurch.com/BFG

ABC PODCASTS: austinbaptistchurch.com/PODCASTS

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

ATTENDANCE

01.25.2026

NO IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE RECORDED

Due to the icy weather and road conditions keeping us closed on Sunday, there was no in-person attendance recorded from Sunday. We will resume recording attendance in next week's Bridge.

FINANCIAL REPORT

01.25.2026

FINANCIAL REPORT DELAYED

Also due to the icy weather, our financial weather is delayed this week as well. We will have our full report in next week's Bridge, February 4th. If you have any questions, you may reach out to Bryan Goodwin at bryang@austinbaptistchurch.com or call the church office at 512-491-9600.

JOIN US SUNDAY FOR WORSHIP!

8:45 AM | Choir-led Worship

10:00 AM | Bible Fellowship Groups

11:15 AM | Band-led Worship

HAVE A QUESTION OR NEED PRAYER?

CONTACT US!

ABC CHURCH OFFICE

Call **512.491.9600** or visit **austinbaptistchurch.com/TEAM**

ABC PRAYER TEAM

Email Bill McGinnis at **billm@austinbaptistchurch.com**

FOR PUBLICATION CONSIDERATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Mariah Parker, Director of Communications

- **EMAIL:** mariahp@austinbaptistchurch.com
- **CALL:** **512.334.8247**

Please submit articles and items for The Bridge by the Friday BEFORE publication.



7016 RIBELIN RANCH DR. AUSTIN, TX, 78750