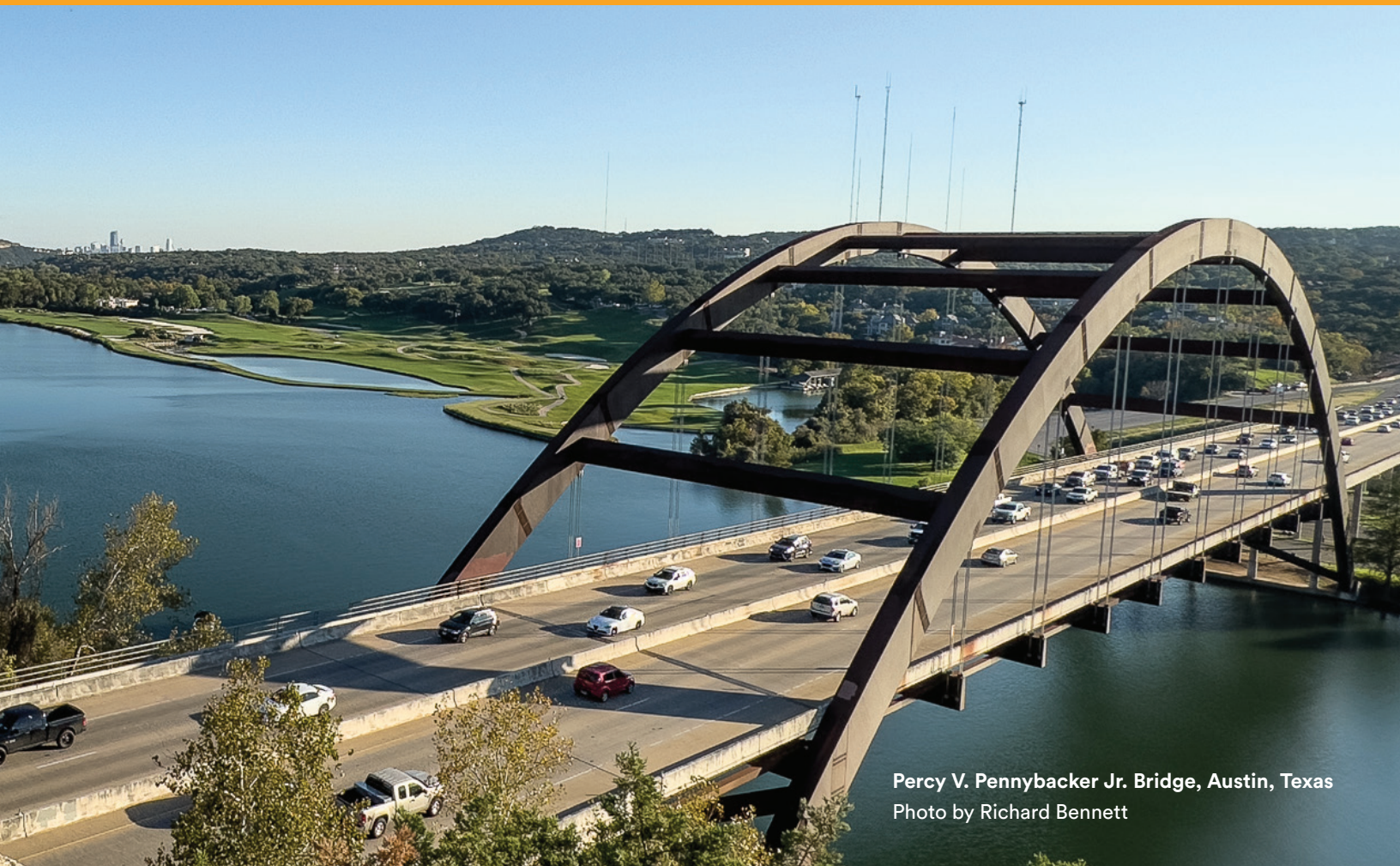


The BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION OF AUSTIN BAPTIST CHURCH



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

VOL. 18 NO. 43

NOVEMBER 19, 2025



**AUSTIN BAPTIST
CHURCH**

LET THERE BE LIGHT

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A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

ABC Family,

James 1:16-17 says, “Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” Thanksgiving is upon us at ABC. This Wednesday we will give thanks as a church family at our Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. And this Sunday I’ll preach a special message to prepare our hearts for this Thanksgiving week.

I hope these upcoming days are filled with laughter, good food, and great company. But I also pray these days are filled with a spirit of thanksgiving in your home. Take time to reflect on the goodness of God. Identify the good and perfect gifts the Father has given you. I hope you know that you are one of those gifts to me. I’m grateful to serve as your pastor, and I am thankful for the fellowship of our church family. God is doing a great work at ABC, and you are a part of that Kingdom story. Thank you for giving me and our staff the honor of serving you every week.

I look forward to celebrating with you this Sunday. Invite a friend and I’ll see you at 8:45am or 11:15am.

Onward and Upward,

DR. JONATHAN SPENCER

SENIOR PASTOR



DEACONS ON CALL

FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 17, 2025



David Lakey

512-663-2669



Josh Davis

903-563-2486

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

NOVEMBER 18, 2025

Hello Church Family,

This month we have two staff members to spotlight.

On November 13th, **Lisa Campbell** celebrated her second year on staff with us as our Ministries Administrator. Lisa does an excellent job managing the office and equipping the myriad of ministries that ABC invests in. She is a tireless worker and has done a great job keeping the office running smoothly. And not only that, she continues to lead well in our worship ministry. She is such an appreciated member of our team!



Also on November 13th, **Mariah Parker** celebrated her second year on staff as our Director of Communications. Mariah has applied her graphic design skills masterfully, from crafting the weekly Bridge newsletter, managing our social media and advertising, as well as to the monumental work of publishing our annual Great Commission Fund Report. She has been a huge blessing to our team and has helped us to advance the gospel well!

Please join me in congratulating these two wonderful women as they serve Christ with excellence through ABC.

In Christ's Love,

DR. MATT GILLUM
EXECUTIVE PASTOR



THIS SUNDAY

Thankful Hearts

November 23, 2025



PACK A SHOEBOX FOR OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

The easiest way to pack a box is to click **THIS LINK** and pack a shoebox online. If you like packing a shoebox the old-fashioned way, pick up a box and return it filled to ABC **no later than THIS SUNDAY, November 23rd, at 11am**. Boxes are located outside the Worship Center, next to the Skylight Room, and in the Children's wing.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

If you have not packed a shoebox in the past, consider packing one this year. To see what items can be included*, visit www.samaritanspurse.com/OCC.

**Please note: soap and toothpaste are no longer allowed in shoeboxes.*



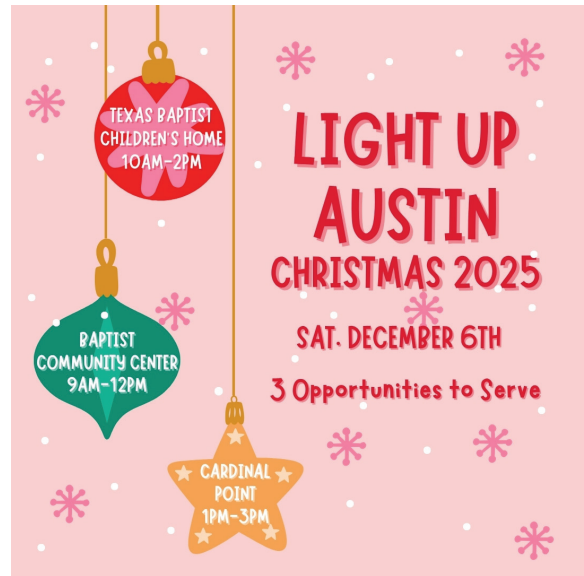
WEEK OF PRAYER for International Missions

NOV 30 - DEC 7, 2025

WMU®



UPCOMING EVENTS



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



UPCOMING EVENTS:



DECEMBER 2025

DEC 7

Pancakes & Pajamas
During 8:45am &
11:15 am Services



**PANCAKES
and Pajamas**



DEC 14

Hot Cocoa, Cookies
and a Train ride!
During 8:45am &
11:15am services



DEC 21

Bethlehem Village
During 10am BFG Hour



DEC 28

NO UPLIFT
NO ELEVATE
NO CHILDCARE



CHRISTMAS

Decorating Week

HELP DECORATE THE
CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS!

Hello and 'Tis the Season!

It's that wonderful time again—time to deck the halls of ABC! If you're like me, it feels like the holidays come around faster every year. A big thank you to everyone who helped make ABC shine in a whole new way last year with all the beautiful new (and like-new) decorations. Because of your hard work, this year's decorating should be much easier and even more fun!

This year, we'll have captains for each area of the church to help guide and direct the decorating efforts. If you helped take on an area last year (as a captain) and would like to help in that area again, please email me at anitam@austinbaptistchurch.com. There are several opportunities to join in, and you're welcome to stay for an entire time slot or just come when you can. Bring a friend, spouse, or family member—the more the merrier! Our Friday night decorating party is where the real magic happens! We'll share pizza, go over instructions, and then get to deck the halls of ABC together.

Thank you for helping make Christmas extra special at ABC. This is a season when many new faces walk through our doors, and your efforts help create a warm, welcoming first impression—both through our people and our beautiful building.

To sign up for one of the time slots please click [HERE](#). Thank you again for serving and spreading the joy of Christmas at ABC. Your time and heart help make this season bright for everyone who walks through our doors!

DECORATING SCHEDULE

Thursday, November 20 | 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Take down fall décor and bring down Christmas items *(12 sign-ups needed)*

Friday, November 21

10:00 am – 3:00 pm | Position decorations in place *(12 sign-ups needed)*

6:00 – 9:00 pm | Pizza Dinner & Deck the Halls! *(30 sign-ups needed)*

Saturday, November 22 | 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Final touches to ensure everything is ready for Sunday *(12 sign-ups needed)*

Sunday, November 23 | 12:30 – 1:30 pm

Decorate the Worship Center *(12 sign-ups needed)*



THE SIGHTS & SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 13
4PM PERFORMANCE

DECEMBER 14
3PM & 6PM PERFORMANCE



SPECIAL GUESTS
**KIRK & JULIANNE
KIRKLAND**

Come and join us for ABC's annual Christmas production: ***The Sights & Sounds of Christmas!*** Our three identical presentations will feature ABC's Choir and Orchestra, Kid's Choirs, and a live nativity! Presentations will be ***December 13th at 4pm***, and ***December 14th at 3pm and 6pm***.

After each performance, we will have holiday fun for the whole family with hot chocolate, cookie and ornament decorating, photo spots, and more! This event is completely **FREE** and open to all ages.

We are also excited to welcome back Kirk and Julianne Kirkland from Nashville, Tennessee. The Kirklands will be joining us as soloists and narrators. The entire Sights & Sounds presentation will feature wonderful Christmas songs by renowned Christian music artist, Michael W. Smith.



TEXAS BAPTIST
CHILDREN'S HOME
10AM-2PM



CARDINAL
POINT
1PM-3PM

LIGHT UP AUSTIN CHRISTMAS 2025

SAT. DECEMBER 6TH
3 Opportunities to Serve

**SCAN HERE
TO SIGN UP**





ABC Women's Ministry

WHERE EVERYONE HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Hello everyone!

Thank you ABC for giving our Embrace Grace moms the most beautiful baby shower. "Shower" is truly the perfect word, because you poured out your time, treasures, and talents so generously. Thank you for putting your love into action in such a meaningful way. To catch a glimpse of all God has done this semester, we invite you to read the heartfelt speech given below by our own member and Embrace Grace leader, Kelsey Dramberger.

SPEECH BY KELSEY DRAMBERGER

November 16, 2025

My name is Kelsey Dramberger and I've had the absolute privilege of being one of the leaders of our Embrace Grace group this fall and helping kick off this ministry at our church. I also want to recognize Julie Christianson, my amazing co-leader, and Anita McGinnis, our brilliant Women's Minister. Both have worked tirelessly day in and day out to start this program and get us here today. Each of you reflect God in all that you do, and I am incredibly grateful to learn from you on a daily basis. I also want to take a moment to thank all of our other Embrace Grace leaders and volunteers who show up on a weekly basis to help with kids care, Midweek dinner, bringing snacks to class, helping pamper our moms on their "Me Day," and everyone who contributed to our beautiful event. Without you all, none of this would be possible, and your love is such a testament to God's goodness. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Now, on to the reason we are here today. Our moms! Twelve weeks ago you each made the brave decision to step through the doors of this church and show up for a group that you knew close to nothing about. Each of you drove 30-45 minutes to get here, pregnant and tired, kids in tow, plenty of reasons not to show up - but you did. Each and every week. And boy am I grateful. Because our group would not have been complete without a single one of you.

Together we laughed and cried each week, and no matter what we each carried in with us on a

Wednesday night, we left feeling lighter and more hopeful after our time spent together. We've been through job changes, sciatic pain, and severe pregnancy sickness (even during class), and our first birth with healthy baby boy in October. We've had highs and lows and everything else along the way. Through it all, you all showed up for yourselves and for the group. What a beautiful thing it was to witness each week!

We've talked about the gift of salvation, God's unending grace, the importance of forgiveness, finding our identity in Christ, trusting in God's plans, how to actively seek out God and get to know Him better, but what I really want to remind you all about today is my hope that Embrace Grace will serve as just the beginning of your story and your journey with your faith. As the Embrace Grace founder Amy Ford says, "Don't gain all this momentum to focus more on God and just let it fade away because our 12 weeks together is over. Let this be your launching pad to fly! We want to see you soar! The miracles you've seen are just the beginning. The closer you get to Him, the more miracles you will see. This is the kind of life God wants for you. Even though Embrace Grace is coming to an end, let this be the beginning of growing your spiritual roots and deepening your faith."

Eighteen weeks ago, Anita and I met with the hope of finding a way to love and support pregnant women in our community so we could be the hands and feet of Jesus. Your baby was planned by God, planned

with purpose, and you were chosen to be that baby's mama. Out of all the moms in the world, God chose you to have this baby. But that doesn't mean that pregnancy and motherhood is easy, because in fact it's the opposite, and that's why we're here.

I hope that in the past 12 weeks together you have felt loved, heard, seen, supported, wanted, known, because that's all we've hoped for. To make you feel loved like Jesus loves you and to support you in any way we can as you embark on this next chapter of your life.

Don't forget to read your Bible and study God's word. His word is alive and is our one source of truth for everything we need. I know we've also talked about continuing group in January and doing meet-ups, but also I also encourage you to become more involved in our church. God created us to need connection and we were not made to do life alone. Austin Baptist Church has an incredible community filled with resources for families and an amazing children's ministry to plug into. And hey, if you want to give your life to Christ or talk about getting baptized, please come chat any day, any time, with me, Julie, or Anita!

And lastly to wrap this thing up, so we can get to the super fun opening of all the gifts, I just want to say a personal thank you to each of you. Thank you for allowing me into your lives. Thank you for opening your minds and your hearts each week and for allowing me to be a small part of your story. I can't even begin to say how meaningful these past three months have been with y'all, but I can tell you honestly that my life has been forever changed because of each of you. You have taught me more than you'll ever know about resilience, about faith, about perseverance, about poise. Each of you are wonderfully made by our God, as are your babies, and from the bottom of my heart please know how grateful I am to know you. And also I love you!

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

UPCOMING EVENTS

LINK UP WITH LIGHT UP

Wednesday, Dec. 3 | 6pm-7:45pm

The ABC Women's Ministry is excited to partner once again on mission to help prepare crafts, activities, and decorations for **Light Up Austin** on December 6th.

Bring a friend and come help *light the way* for our Austin neighbors during this holiday season!*

**There will be NO childcare available.*

WOMEN'S RETREAT

"BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP"

February 6-7 | Vintage Villas

Before the holiday rush begins, take a moment to register and set aside time to grow in faith and community at our Women's Retreat in 2026!

[CLICK HERE
TO REGISTER](#)

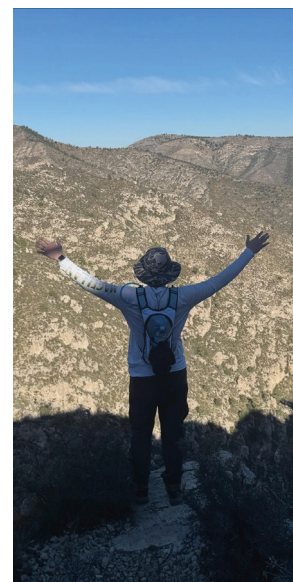
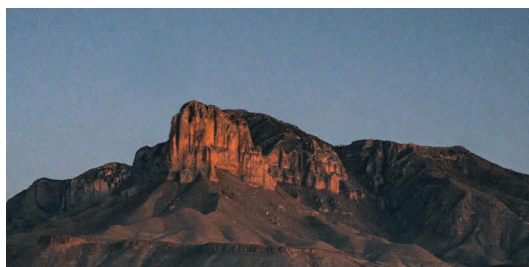
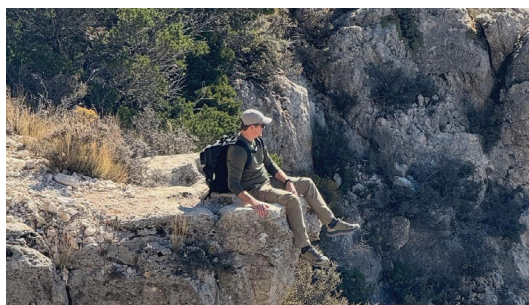
Embrace Grace Baby Shower

Sunday, November 16, 2025



Men's Guadalupe Peak Hike

November 13-15, 2025



WEEK IN REVIEW

From the Pages of Bill's Notebook

Guest Article - November 19, 2025

“Don’t Discount God” by Annabelle McGinnis Jenkins

One day, I was excited because I planned to go to Aldi and buy groceries after work. I had gotten all prepared. I had made a list and even got my reusable grocery bags ready the night before. On my way to Aldi though, I noticed a crucial component was missing — a quarter to get a buggy. As I was driving, I prayed to God and told him, “I trust that you will provide a quarter for me in some way since you always take care of me.” I heard God say, “Check in your wallet for a quarter.” In my haste and anxiousness to get into the store, I checked my wallet quickly but didn’t see a quarter. I said to myself, “It’s okay, I will just use my reusable grocery bags to get my groceries. I don’t need a buggy.” At first it was fine just using the bags because they were empty and light. But the further I got into the store and started loading it down with more food, the heavier the bag got. By the end of my trip, I was tired and grouchy. Nevertheless, I was determined to finish what I’d started, so I heaved my groceries onto the conveyor belt to check out. As I reloaded my items into my bag to head out of the store, I hear God once again say, “Check your wallet and this time, take your time.” So, I listened and looked again, making sure to take my time. There, hidden in between some cards, was a quarter. How much easier would that quarter have made my whole shopping experience if I had just taken my time to listen and trust in what God had told me.

God was using this Aldi experience to show me that even though I say, “I trust you Lord,” my actions don’t reflect that. My actions showed that I put more trust in myself and my timing. But putting trust in myself makes my burdens heavier and heavier, much like the grocery bags. God taught me that I need to slow down, refocus on Him, and let Him carry my “bags”. What bags are you carrying that you can give to the Lord?

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

“Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken.”
-Psalms 55:22 (NIV)

In His Joy,

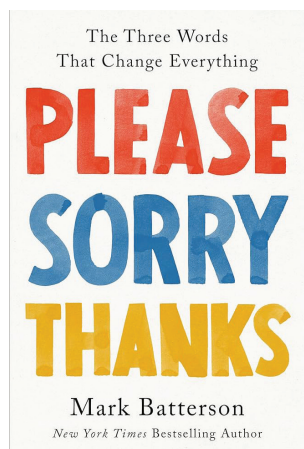
BILL MCGINNIS

PASTOR OF CARE





ABC Library



Please, Sorry, Thanks: Three Words that Change Everything by Mark Batterson

Mark Batterson has a Doctor of Ministry from Regent University and is the author of 25 books, including one children's book which he wrote for his daughter. Batterson serves at the National Community Church in Washington D.C. as the "Lead Visionary." The National Community Church owns and operates several organizations that are gathering places for community. These include: Ebenezers Coffee, Miracle Theatre, the DC Dream Center, the Capital Turnaround, and Culture House. Batterson's website says he, "...also serves as the Lead Visionary for The Dream Collective, which equips and supports dreamers who long for revival in the church, reformation in the kingdom, and renaissance in culture."

In the book ***Please, Sorry, Thanks***, Batterson points to how your words can determine your destiny in life. He says that our words can be self-fulfilling prophecies. Studies show that speaking negative words to plants can cause them to grow weak but that speaking positive words can help them flourish. The same is true for people. Our words reveal the condition of our heart. If you want to change your life, your relationships, and your attitude, you must change your words. This book is divided into three parts. Each part has five chapters. Part one of the book discusses *The Psychology Of Please*. The word "please" can open hearts, minds, and doors. Part two presents *The Science Of Sorry*. The word "sorry" can mend broken relationships. Part three discusses *The Theology Of Thanks*. The word "thanks" when used sincerely can build bridges and be, "the flywheel of gratitude." These three little words hold the secret to success in life, love, and leadership. Batterson says that these three words are the foundation of healthy relationships, that they are the only ceiling on your spiritual, mental, and emotional health, and that they determine how happy you are and how holy you are. If you want to change the world, please, sorry, and thanks must become a way of life.

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

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S FAITHFULNESS

ATTENDANCE11.16.2025

8:45 AM WORSHIP	636
11:15 AM WORSHIP	316
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP	728

FINANCIAL REPORT11.16.2025

ACCOUNT	NOV. 16, 2025	YTD
GENERAL FUND	\$155,331.24	\$5,761,562.99
DESIGNATED	\$2,950.00	\$145,509.40
LIGHT THE WAY - COMBINED	\$9,422.33	\$2,500,000.89
TOTAL GIVING	\$167,703.57	\$8,419,573.28

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:

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- **EMAIL:** **mariahp@austinbaptistchurch.com**
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Please submit articles and items for The Bridge by the Friday BEFORE publication.



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