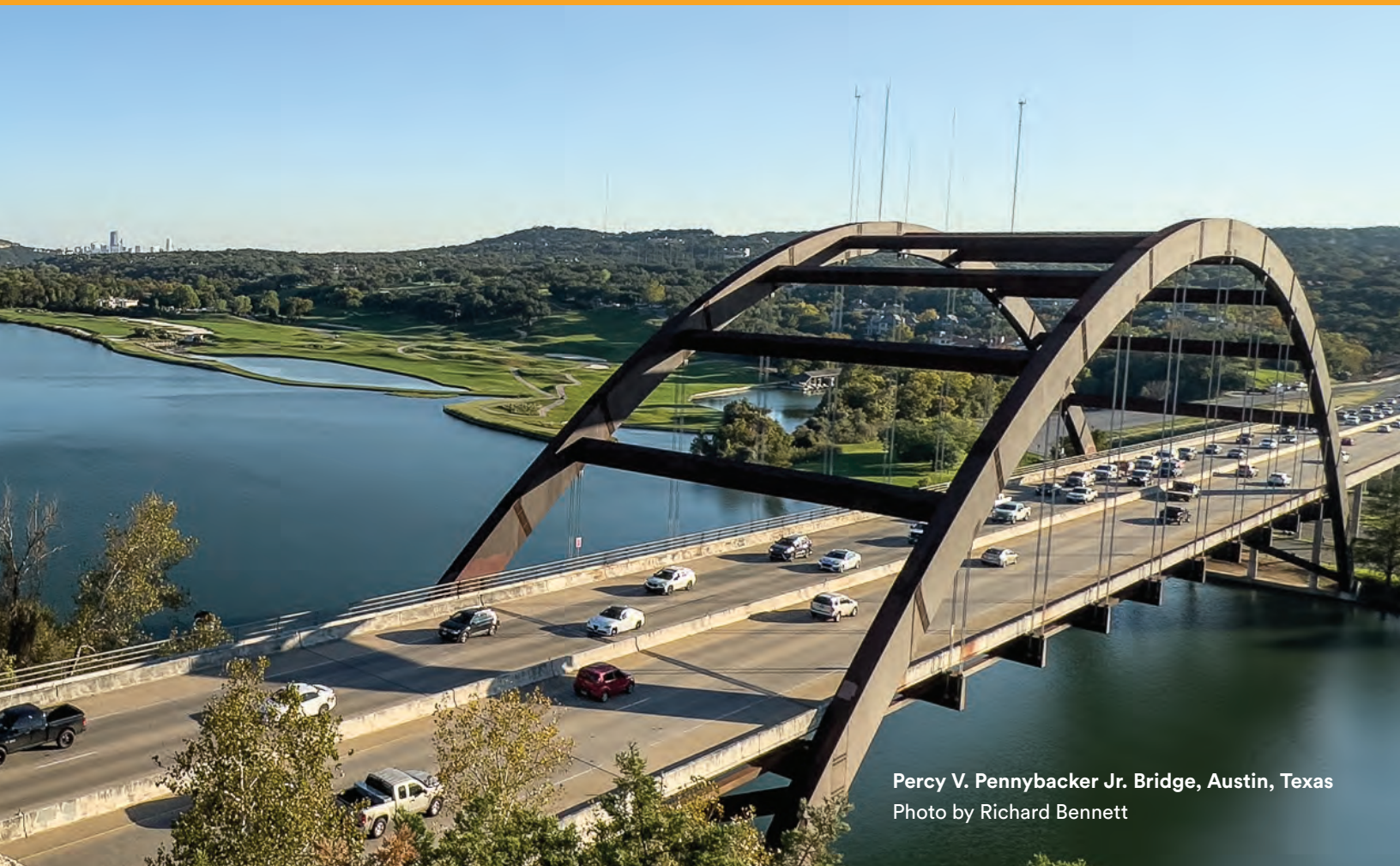


The BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION OF AUSTIN BAPTIST CHURCH



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

VOL. 18 NO. 46

DECEMBER 17, 2025



**AUSTIN BAPTIST
CHURCH**

LET THERE BE LIGHT

TABLE of CONTENTS

A Word from Our Pastor	3
Deacons on Call	4
Upcoming Events	5
Weekly Reminders	6
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering	6
An Expression of Thanks: Sights & Sounds of Christmas	7
Join the ABC Choir and Orchestra!	8
Register for Connection Weekend	8
Abundant Living Winter Study	9
Sherlock Jesus: Evangelism Training Class	9
ABC Women's Ministry	10
Week in Review	11-13
- Third Sunday of Advent	
- BFG Class Christmas Parties	
- The Sights & Sounds of Christmas	
- ABC Kids Train Ride	
From the Pages of Bill's Notebook	14
Our Response to God's Faithfulness	15
- Attendance	
- Financial Report	



A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

ABC Family,

As 2025 is nearing its end, I want to remind you of our opportunity to make a Kingdom impact through year-end giving. Thank you for your continued generosity to our general fund at ABC which we call, “The Great Commission Fund.” The Great Commission Fund provides the resources for our church to advance the Great Commission forward through our ministries and missions partnerships. Your tithes and offerings to this fund make ministry possible, including great outreach events such as the recent Sights & Sounds of Christmas.

I also want to make a plug for you to consider giving above your tithes and offerings to our Light The Way generosity initiative. God has done remarkable things this year through this church-wide effort. I look forward to celebrating the retirement of our debt with you in January as we embark on our first ever debt-free year! However, I also look forward to celebrating the completion of our remaining objectives in 2026. 100% of your LTW gifts will go toward us fulfilling our remaining missions’ projects, media improvements, and campus security upgrades. Here are the details of our unfinished LTW business:

Baptist Community Center – We will provide resources to fund food ministry and campus improvements at this downtown mission center.

North American Mission Board – Fund Send LA’s church planting residency program and support Pastor Derek Berry’s church plant in northern Pasadena.

Love For Myanmar – Help build the Healing Trauma Center on the land we have already leased in Yangon.

Media Improvements – New cameras, screens, and online broadcast systems will be installed in the new year. We will upgrade our lighting systems next.

Security Upgrades – We will professionally upgrade our security, adding more cameras and technology systems both inside our facilities and outside in the parking lots.

We need around \$600k to complete all remaining Light The Way objectives. I am confident that God will continue to work through us to Light The Way forward for ABC in 2026. Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I look forward to pressing on to week three of our Christmas prophecy series, “The Promise of Christmas.” I will see you at 8:45am or 11:15am.

Onward and Upward,

DR. JONATHAN SPENCER

SENIOR PASTOR





CURRENT SERIES

The Promise of Christmas

Unwrapping the Christmas Prophecies

DEACONS ON CALL

FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 15, 2025



Paul Boggs

770-826-5290



John DeLaCruz

512-585-0487

UPCOMING EVENTS



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

WEEKLY REMINDERS

KIDS EVENTS



STUDENT EVENTS



한글 ENSEMBLE JUNTO 함께 JUNTO ZUSAMMEN BMECTE 一起
TOGETHER



Together, we find the lost, give help to the hurting,
share the hope of Christ, and witness God grow His Church
around the world. Your generosity today changes lives.



INTERNATIONAL
MISSION BOARD

GIVE TODAY AT
austinbaptistchurch.com/GIVE

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® is a registered trademark of WMU®.

AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE: **THE SIGHTS & SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS**

As Worship Pastor, I have the profound joy of serving alongside an extraordinary group of people, and after our recent Sights & Sounds of Christmas presentations, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt appreciation.

To our Worship Choir, Orchestra, Nativity Team, Kids Choir, Media Ministry, Church Family, and Staff—THANK YOU. Each of you played a vital role in bringing this celebration to life. Your dedication, preparation, and servant-hearted teamwork came together in a beautiful expression of musical excellence and worshipful praise. Because of your commitment, the story of Christ's birth was shared in a way that was both powerful and deeply moving.

What made these presentations especially meaningful was not just the quality of the music, the visuals, or the production—but the unity behind it all. Every rehearsal, every technical cue, every costume, note, and prayer reflected a shared desire to honor the Lord and point others to Him. You worked together with grace, flexibility, and joy, and it was evident to everyone who experienced these presentations.

We were also honored to welcome our guest artists, Kirk and Julianne Kirkland, whose contributions were an outstanding addition to our presentations. They expressed how deeply moved they were by Austin Baptist Church, noting that ABC is a very special place—one marked by people who genuinely care for one another and for their community. That testimony speaks volumes about who we are as a church family.

Thank you for using your gifts to celebrate the birth of Christ with such excellence and humility. Thank you for serving faithfully behind the scenes and on the platform. Most of all, thank you for allowing God to work through you to proclaim the hope, joy, and love found in Jesus.

It is truly an honor to serve alongside you all.

With gratitude,

DR. TODD F. STEARNS

WORSHIP PASTOR



JOIN THE ABC CHOIR & ORCHESTRA!

Now is a great time to use your God-given gifts and talents in ministry at Austin Baptist Church! We invite singers and instrumentalists of all skill levels to be a part of our Choir and Orchestra as we prepare for an exciting season of worship. Come be part of what God is doing through worship at Austin Baptist Church!

KICKOFF REHEARSALS (FOR BOTH GROUPS): January 7th, 2026

CHOIR

Todd & Sonya Stearns will be directing the choir. So whether you're returning, or joining for the first time, this is a wonderful opportunity to serve, grow, and worship together through music. We will introduce six new songs for the Winter/Spring season, including a few for Good Friday and Easter services!

ORCHESTRA

Special Guest Orchestra Leader **David Winkler**, arranger and orchestrator, will be leading our orchestra for this special kickoff rehearsal. We will also be introducing new songs for the season!



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Dr. Todd Stearns at todds@austinbaptistchurch.com

**CONNECTION
WEEKEND** THE PURSUIT
OF DISCIPLESHIP
FEBRUARY 20-22, 2026

SIGN UP FOR CONNECTION WEEKEND!

STUDENTS! Our favorite weekend of the year is this February 20th-22nd. Connection Weekend is our yearly in-town retreat for students 6th-12th grade. We're excited to welcome our guest speaker, Chad Glover, as well as our worship team from Breakaway Worship. It will be a great weekend of fun, small groups, worship, games, and more. So invite friends and sign up now!

Registration is open now at the link **HERE** or at austinbaptistchurch.com/connectionwknd2026

Questions? Contact Corbin Smith
corbins@austinbaptistchurch.com



A WINTER JOURNEY

TRACING THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Abundant Living BFG has just launched a fresh study through the Gospel of Matthew. All are invited to discover the richness of Jesus' teaching, the power of His ministry, and the fulfillment of God's promises. Dive deep with us in a time of learning, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

Abundant Living is a multigenerational class focusing on expository Bible study, prayer, relationships, and service leveraging the Lifeway's *Explore the Bible* study guide. Abundant Living meets in Room 228 every Sunday at 10am.

CONTACT: David McClung
david.mcclung@hotmail.com

Sherlock Jesus: Evangelism Essentials

Wednesdays at Midweek | Room 240 @ 6:30pm

Begins Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Are you using 20th century ideas in the 21st century? Are you a believer of any age wanting to level up in your personal evangelism? Are you awkward getting a Gospel conversation started with unbelievers? Let's find out together. This Midweek study is all about understanding the times and issues we face in 2026 and what to do about it.

Led by Thom Kurtz, a certified trainer in ***Conversational Evangelism***, the 2012 best-selling book by David and Norman Geisler. Learn to approach evangelism by thinking like Jesus, as if Sherlock Holmes was under the power of the Holy Spirit with love to share, solving spiritual mysteries by careful observation and understanding about fellow men and women. It's all strictly Bible-based with plenty of Bible verses for references.

No cost, no books to read, and only a minimal time commitment. Come join us!

Future weekly topics include:

- Getting to people's 4-point Point of View (POV) model
- How evangelism involves God's providence in science
- God-incidences & government leaders

CONTACT: Thom Kurtz | thom_kurtz@hotmail.com



ABC Women's Ministry

WHERE EVERYONE HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE

The ABC Women's Ministry is excited to introduce our Winter/Spring Women's GAIT Bible Studies! The name comes from ABC's core values of *Grace, Authenticity, Impact*, and *Truth*, where you will find all of these values in each study. Our prayer is that, regardless of your gait as you come in, you will leave as John 10:9 says, "finding good pastures." Join us, beginning in January, for one of these new studies. While each study is different, they are all intentional, welcoming, conversational, fun, and encouraging! So whatever your gait may be, there is a place for everyone around the table. Come find your seat!

WINTER/SPRING BIBLE STUDIES 2026

Register for these studies online and buy your books
at austinbaptistchurch.com/womensbiblestudies

INDUCTIVE + DISCUSSION

MONDAY @ 6:30PM
TUESDAY @ 9:30AM
(OR TUESDAY ZOOM ONLY
@6:30PM)

ROOM 228
MONDAY - JANUARY 13TH
TUESDAY - JANUARY 14TH

Join Marcia Furrow as she takes you on a journey through 1 Samuel: The Lives of Samuel and Saul with an in-depth look at this historical period beginning with the miraculous birth of Samuel, continuing through Saul's crowning as Israel's first king, and concluding with his tragic death.

MARCIA FURROW
marcia.furrow@gmail.com

(No childcare provided)

TOPICAL + DISCUSSION

WEDNESDAY
@ 6:30PM

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

ROOM 243 A/B
WEDNESDAY - JANUARY 7TH

Join Anita McGinnis and our table leaders for Live A Praying Life, as you discover the difference in having a prayer life and having a praying life!

Neither book or workbook are required, and both cover the same content. You may choose whether to purchase either or both.

ANITA MCGINNIS
anitam@austinbaptistchurch.com

CHRISTA RATCLIFF
cnratcliff@gmail.com

(Childcare provided)

MOMQ: MENTORSHIP + STUDY
THURSDAY @ 9:45AM
MOTHERHOOD

ROOM 243 A/B
WEDNESDAY - JANUARY 15TH

Join Ginger Tew and her mentoring moms as they study *Raising Virtuous Children* and learn what biblical parenting is all about. MomQ is an intergenerational community designed to encourage and support women in their role as mothers. You will find a place to connect, encourage, and support each other through the journey of motherhood.

Fee to register is \$15 at the beginning of January.

GINGER TEW
gingertew@yahoo.com

(Childcare provided for 3mo-5yrs
and homeschooled children)

Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 14, 2025



BFG Christmas Parties

December 7 & 13, 2025



The Sights & Sounds of Christmas

December 13 & 14, 2025



WEEK IN REVIEW

ABC Kids Train Ride December 14, 2025



From the Pages of Bill's Notebook

As a preteen boy, my family had a small 7-acre farm on the Little River in Blount County, Tennessee with a little farmhouse that had a red tin roof. We used to go there in the evenings and on weekends to garden, fish, and enjoy the pleasant sights and sounds of the bucolic setting. One day, while all four of us were in the garden, we heard the sound of tires on gravel. We couldn't see the car yet because the road berm prevented it, but you could see the dust rolling. Then as the car rolled into sight, I was surprised to see the face of a cute girl from my class peering out the back window. I wasn't sure what to do with the weird, warm anxious emotions that were new to my preteen self as the car slowed to round the curve just past our riverside farm. So, I just stared, waved, turned red, and then quickly, awkwardly looked down to keep hoeing potatoes. The rush of adrenaline, dopamine, and cortisol flooded my whole body, bringing butterflies to my stomach when the car stopped, backed up, and pulled into our driveway. My head was spinning, with both glee and agony. My parents, my sister, and I went to greet our guests who were apparently just out for a drive. I couldn't figure out what to do with my arms and legs. All four appendages had seemingly lost any connection to my brain. Our parents talked and we tried not to look at each other. Unable to stand still, I kicked the dirt and picked up a rock to throw at the huge sycamore tree just a few yards away. I missed the tree, so my sister laughed at me, the girl giggled, and my face turned even more red. After a few moments, our serendipitous guests climbed back in the car and drove away. And just like that, they were gone. After that, every time we went to the farm, I listened for tires on gravel and looked for dust rolling into the air, anticipating who may stop in our driveway next.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that literally everything anticipates the day that those who belong to Jesus will be set free from our fleshly awkwardness and mess-ups and fully embrace the blessings and bliss of our Spiritual freedom in Christ. He says, "For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who His children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as His adopted children, including the new bodies He has promised us" (Romans 8:19-23 NLT).

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



OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S FAITHFULNESS

ATTENDANCE12.14.2025

8:45 AM WORSHIP	643
11:15 AM WORSHIP	308
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP	719

FINANCIAL REPORT12.14.2025

ACCOUNT	DEC. 14, 2025	YTD
GENERAL FUND	\$235,929.93	\$6,439,302.02
DESIGNATED	\$15,590.00	\$170,057.40
LIGHT THE WAY - COMBINED	\$15,989.00	\$2,573,598.89
TOTAL GIVING	\$277,508.93	\$9,305,458.31
MISSIONS OFFERING	TOTAL GIVEN	GOAL
LOTTIE MOON	\$25,748.00	\$60,000

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