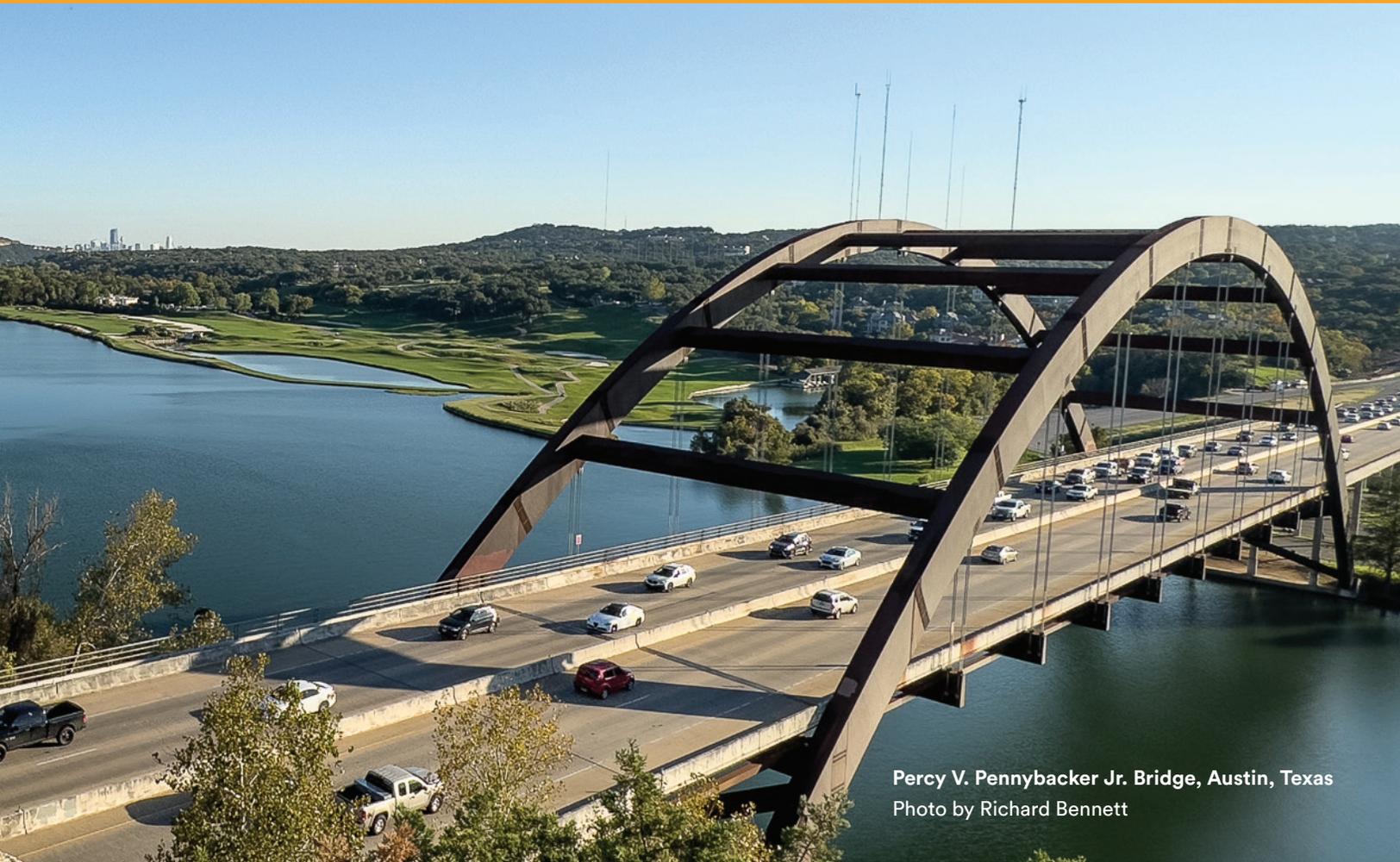


The BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION OF AUSTIN BAPTIST CHURCH



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

VOL. 19 NO. 11

MARCH 25, 2026



**AUSTIN BAPTIST
CHURCH**

LET THERE BE LIGHT

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A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

ABC Family,

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (John 12:13). Holy Week is upon us, and I hope you are praying expectantly for a special week of ministry at ABC. It kicks off this Palm Sunday, as we celebrate Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Our Kids’ choir will be singing, and it will be a wonderful day of worship in both of our services.

Make sure you go home with Easter cards to invite someone to join you the following weekend. We will have a Good Friday service at 6pm, and three celebration services on Easter Sunday: 8am (Choir-led), 9:30am (Choir-led), and 11:15am (Band-led). The Kids’ Ministry Easter Egg Hunt will follow the final service that day. If you have flexibility in your schedule, I encourage you to consider attending the 8am service. This would be a great way to serve your neighbors by opening up your seat for someone else in the later services.

It has been a busy week of installations here at the church. A work crew is installing new carpet inside the Worship Center. We also have people on the ground from Paragon 360. These technicians are installing phase one of our media upgrades through your generosity to *Light The Way*. We will have new cameras, a new video directing room, and new audio broadcast systems in place for this weekend. I’m looking forward to seeing how God will use these new tools to help us advance the Gospel beyond our church walls.

Thank you for your continued generosity in these efforts. Your faithfulness to our General Fund, The Great Commission Fund, makes things like new carpet possible. I’m so thankful we can maintain this beautiful facility, so we can facilitate impactful ministry on our campus. I’m thankful for your continued commitment to *Light The Way*. We are inching closer to the conclusion of this generosity initiative. By God’s grace, this year we will complete phase two of the media upgrades (new worship center screens and lighting), install new security technology across the campus, and wrap up our special missions projects.

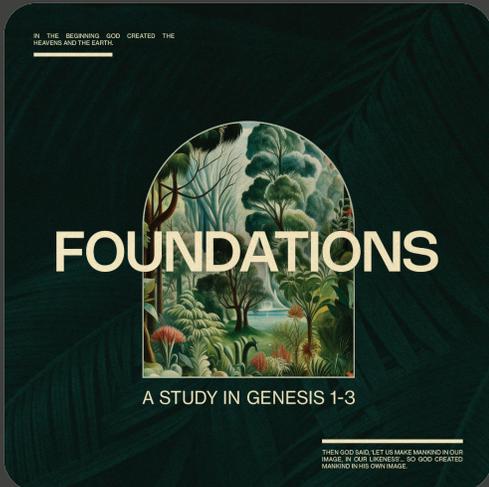
I’m looking forward to worshipping with you this Sunday at 8:45am or 11:15am. Invite a friend to join you.

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 MARCH 23, 2026



Hank Anawaty

512-497-7395



Walt Mizell

512-771-3291

CHURCHWIDE ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026



Christy Washburn



Brandon Mack



Christopher Dees



**LIGHT UP
YOUR *Life***

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

MATTHEW 28:19-20

THANK YOU CHURCH FAMILY

Dear Church Family,

On January 19th, I began an 8-week sabbatical. After 13+ years of ministry at Austin Baptist Church, it was a true gift to refresh, grow, produce, worship, and connect. I'm so thankful that the church gave me this opportunity. I know that it was a real sacrifice to allow me to take this time, and I want you to know how incredibly grateful I am. I wanted to give a brief summary of the things that the Lord blessed me to be able to do during the past eight weeks.

First, as a person electrified by travel, I had the opportunity to go to many unique places, including some I'd never experienced before. I traveled to Glorieta, New Mexico for a solitude retreat, to Lost Maples State Park for a camping/hiking trip, to Port Aransas for a family trip, to Norman, Oklahoma to worship at the church of one of my seminary students, to Chicago for our 15th anniversary trip, and to Phoenix, Arizona for a trip to spring training with my dad (go Texas Rangers!). It was a real joy to experience so much in a short span, and the blessing of the length was really to be psychologically present everywhere I went.

The sabbatical was about more than just travel. I worshipped at 5 different churches (plus a Sunday iced in). I was able to spend time copying down the gospel of John. I read 14 books and wrote several thousand words in a book manuscript and on my personal blog (mcgillum.blog). I connected with several people across the country in ministry and worshiped in many styles. It lifted my heart tremendously to see the Lord at work in thousands of people's lives, both in our city and beyond.

But probably the most impactful part of the sabbatical was the time I was given to spend with the Lord and with my family. I was able to spend a large amount of time in prayer and devotional reading, considering what the Lord is doing in

my life. I was able to invest time with Adrian, growing deeper in our marriage through receiving and sharing counseling, dreaming together on what the Lord wants to do in our lives, and creating memories. I spent time and adventure with my kids, investing in them and encouraging and discipling them. I spent great time with my parents, walking through a wonderful experience of togetherness. I spent some great time with friends, sharpening and encouraging one another in relational discipleship.

With all of this, I am excited to return and discover all the wonderful things the Lord has done in my absence. I have prayed for you many times and have been so thrilled as I've seen and heard how the Lord is blessing ABC. I'm excited to rejoin you in the mission to "Lead people into a lifechanging relationship with the Light of the World, Jesus Christ."

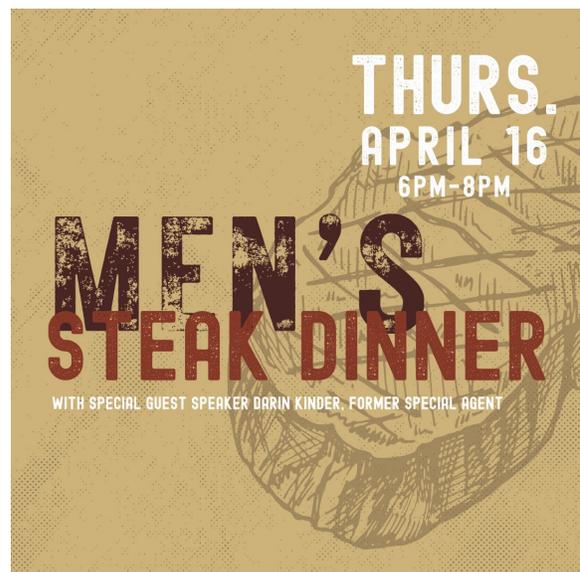
And here's my hope: that the Lord would begin a movement in our faith family. I am praying that the Lord would empower and invigorate us for the great opportunities at hand to reach our community for Him. I am praying that I will lay down my own preferences for the sake of the Kingdom and that we will grow together into maturity in Him. I am expectant that we will see the Lord move the baptism waters in an exponential way as we're faithful to take His Word to the city of Austin and beyond.

I'm so glad we get to do this together.

By Christ's Love,

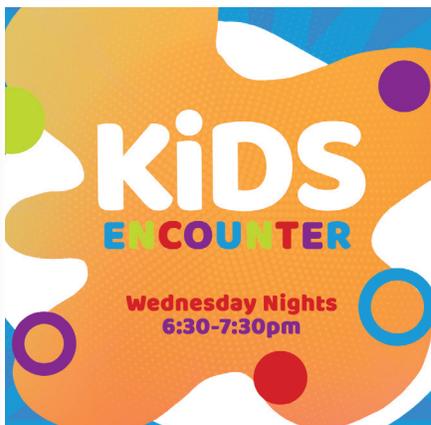
DR. MATT GILLUM
EXECUTIVE PASTOR

UPCOMING EVENTS



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

WEEKLY REMINDERS



MIDWEEK MENU

NEXT WEEK'S MENU
APRIL 1

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

Catfish, baked potato, mixed vegetables,
hush puppies, and salad bar

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

SAVE THE DATE FOR....



PALM SUNDAY
MARCH 29

8:45AM
Choir-led service

11:15AM
Band-led service

GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 3

6:00PM
Choir-led service & Lord's Supper

EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 5

8:00AM & 9:30AM
Choir-led service

11:15AM
Band-led service

austinbaptistchurch.com/Easter2026

**ABC
SERVES
AUSTIN, TX
APRIL 18, 2026**

WHAT IS ABC SERVES?

Every spring, we set aside a special day to step outside the church walls and serve the local community of Austin. This year, save the date for ABC Serves on April 18th!

NEXT STEPS TO VOLUNTEER

- Sign up [HERE](#) or at austinbaptistchurch.com/ABCServes2026 (and also view where your BFG class will be serving).
- Choose which Bible Fellowship Group you'd like to serve with (every group will serve with a different service organization based locally in Austin).
- Pick a T-Shirt size (or choose to wear one from a previous year).



291 Million

ARE ESTIMATED TO BE
LIVING WITHOUT CHRIST
IN NORTH AMERICA

Give online at
AUSTINBAPTISTCHURCH.COM/GIVE

Annie Armstrong
Easter Offering



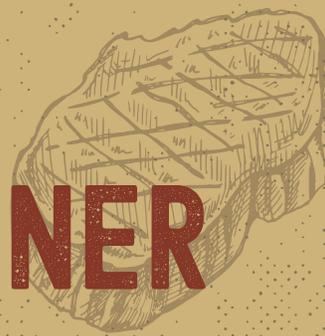
North American
Mission Board

ABC'S GOAL

\$15,000

FOR NATIONAL MISSIONS

MEN'S STEAK DINNER



THURS.
APRIL 16
6PM-8PM

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE OUR VERY FIRST MEN'S STEAK DINNER!

Come be encouraged in the Word of God with other men and enjoy a 16 oz hand-cut ribeye steak dinner hosted and prepared by our deacons.

We are also excited to welcome our guest speaker Darin Kinder, a former US Secret Service agent, Medal of Valor recipient, and a survivor of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. Darin's unique experience of those events helped form his Christian perspective as an author and speaker. He brings a word that men need to hear. So invite friends, colleagues, and neighbors and don't miss out on this fantastic men's ministry event!

REGISTER AT AUSTINBAPTISTCHURCH.COM/STEAKDINNER



WITH SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
DARIN KINDER, FORMER SPECIAL AGENT



ABC Women's Ministry

WHERE EVERYONE HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE

If you're needing some encouragement, or wanting to give some, the Women's CORD Ministry may be just the fit for you. To get a sense of what it is, I thought it was best to hear from one of our encouragers, Mary Sabota. ~**Anita McGinnis**

FROM MARY SABOTA

This past August, my husband and I began attending Austin Baptist Church, even though it wasn't our first visit. Years earlier, I sensed that the Lord was guiding us toward this church. On our way to our first visit, I prayed for confirmation of His plan. To my amazement, a rainbow appeared over the road, as if it were a sign that we were meant to be there. Although we didn't stay at that time for various reasons, we eventually made our way back.

Always wanting to serve the Lord, I looked for where He might want to use me. I heard about the CORD Ministry at the Women's Picnic in the fall and felt it was perfectly aligned with how God had used me in the past. I signed up, and I believe God's hand was in pairing me with Analea.

From the beginning, Analea has trusted me with her stories, her uncertainties, and her dreams. I've tried to make her feel heard and valued, where her emotions and experiences matter. When I sense that my insights, relevant experiences, or vulnerabilities would be helpful, I share them. But I've learned that mentorship isn't about dispensing advice—it's about witnessing someone's journey

and celebrating their evolution. I've had the joy of cheering her victories and encouraging her to pursue what matters most to her.

Yet this relationship flows in both directions. Analea's perspective and input have enriched my life. She listens empathetically to some of the happenings in my life as well. It feels like we are more like friends than mentor/mentee.

Above all, our shared dedication to the Lord deeply influences our interactions. We discuss faith naturally as it influences our daily choices and relationships. I encouraged her to read through the entire Bible, and she's embraced that challenge with impressive commitment. Together, we bring our hopes and questions to God in prayer, waiting expectantly for His fulfillment and guidance.

What I've come to understand is that mentorship isn't transactional—it's transformative. We have truly been knitted together in ways that have the power to reshape us both. I'm deeply grateful for Analea's presence in my life, and I look forward to watching our relationship continue to grow and evolve.

The heart of CORD is to create a community within ABC where one woman (the encourager) walks alongside another (the encouragee), sharing her story, experience and faith in ways that help both women grow spiritually. If you are in need of encouragement, we would love to connect with you!

CONTACT:

Anita McGinnis (anitam@austinbaptistchurch.com)

Kim Anawaty (kanawaty@gmail.com)

From the Pages of Bill's Notebook

When we lived in Nashville, I was working four jobs, and my family and I were living with my in-laws. At my previous church, we lived in the parsonage, so when I left the church with no place to go, we went to live with Anita's parents. I worked part-time at another church, at the local Baptist Association, at the UPS store, and at a local gymnastics gym, all while doing my due diligence and praying to find a new full-time ministry opportunity. Some days I had to check where I was working that day. I had dyscalculia, getting my days and weeks mixed up. My days didn't have much time left in them for my family. I tried to spend my days off with my family, but it seemed I was working every day somewhere just trying to get my feet back under me, pay my bills, and rebuild my life. One day my father-in-law said, "Bill, your son really needs you right now." It broke my heart. All the indicators in his life checked off: he was winning awards at school and playing golf with his granddad, he had friends and seemed happy. My other kids seemed to be doing well, too. They were enjoying country club life and being spoiled by their grandparents, while attending a school in one of the best districts in the nation. But my father-in-law was right; I didn't have much time in my schedule for my family. They kept their game faces on because they knew I was looking for a new ministry, but I wasn't there for some important day-to-day conversations about life in elementary school, bed-time prayers, or tuck-in times. When God led me to be a pastor on staff at another church, I had to live in Chattanooga and commute three hours to be home with my family until the school year ended. The bonus was I only had one job instead of four. When my family finally joined me in Chattanooga, we ate dinner together every night. Every Friday was set aside to go explore our new town together. We were finally creating some new memories and experiences together, but the days we lost over that years' time would never be recovered. The classic song "The Cat's in the Cradle" by Harry Chapin still plays on the radio in my mind when I think about those days.

In the book of 1 Kings there was a man whose name was Hiel, which means "Brother of God." He was from the city of Bethel, which means "House of God." He famously rebuilt Jericho, but literally gave up his family for the fame. This man, who was a supposed follower of God, had not consulted Him but had decided to follow the prevailing practice of using his sons as "foundation sacrifices" to the pagan gods when building a building. Actual skeletons have been found in the walls of buildings excavated around that area by archaeologists. The first son's name, Abiram, means "my father is exalted." The second son's name, Segub, means "exalted." This man was willing to give up his family to be seen as exalted for his great work. This story comes from one verse in the book of 1 Kings. Here's how it reads: "... *Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho. At the cost of Abiram his firstborn, he laid its foundation, and at the cost of Segub his youngest, he finished its gates, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Joshua son of Nun*" (1 Kings 16:34 CSB). Notice that the Israelite conqueror of the Promised Land, Joshua, had prophesied that this very thing would happen. Remember this was the city whose walls had collapsed after the Ark of the Lord and the Israelite army had marched around it for seven days and then shouted and blew trumpets. Sometimes even people who are considered "God's people" do the same things the pagans do for accolades, wealth, and benefits that cost them everything.

When Jesus comes to Jericho much later, there is "good news." A man named Zacchaeus had given up relationships to become wealthy. This Israelite tax collector for the occupying Romans, famously repented, had Jesus stay at his house, and also returned the money (four-fold) to the people he had gouged while collecting taxes. When Jesus turned Zacchaeus's life around, it restored his relationship to God and the people he had hurt. A real relationship with God reorders our priorities and helps us act like our "Jesus-self," valuing God and others over fame, prosperity, and worldly gains.

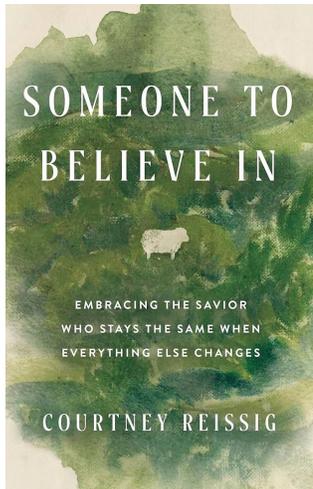
Hang in there people! God is glad to be with us! I'm praying for us all!

In His Joy,
BILL MCGINNIS
PASTOR OF CARE





ABC Library



***Someone to Believe In: Embracing The Savior Who Stays The Same When Everything Else Changes* by Courtney Reissig**

Reissig lives in Little Rock, Arkansas with her husband and four boys. She met her husband at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary while she was working on her M.A. in Christian Ministries. She has written five books and one children's book. Reissig also writes for various Christian websites, has a blog on Substack, and teaches Bible studies.

Someone To Believe In is a study of the Gospel of John and points to the Biblical promise of Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." Reissig has struggled like many others. Her trust has been shaken, and spiritual stability seemed far away. God made it clear to her through studying the Book of John, "...that even in the most unstable and changing of times, there is One who stays the same. His name is Jesus Christ, and He's someone to believe in." The book is written in three parts. Part 1 is titled *The Same in the Past* and covers John 1-4. Part 2 is titled *The Same in the Present* and covers John 9-10 and 13-17. Part 3 is titled *The Same in the Future* and covers John chapters 6, 11, and 14. At the end of each of the three parts, there is a chapter in which Reissig shares experiences from her life and from the lives of other individuals that illustrate the content of that section. For those, "...who have been disoriented, doubting, grieving, exhausted, or shaken in your faith" or have experienced other obstacles to belief, this book can lead you to, "...encounter the steadying power of the unchangeable Christ."

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 **03.22.2026**

8:45 AM WORSHIP	563
11:15 AM WORSHIP	388
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP	722

FINANCIAL REPORT **03.22.2026**

ACCOUNT	MAR. 22, 2026	YTD
GENERAL FUND	\$75,848.20	\$1,282,770.64
DESIGNATED	\$3,250.00	\$53,463.00
LIGHT THE WAY - COMBINED	\$7,148.30	\$287,696.58
TOTAL GIVING	\$82,246.50	\$1,623,930.22

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.



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