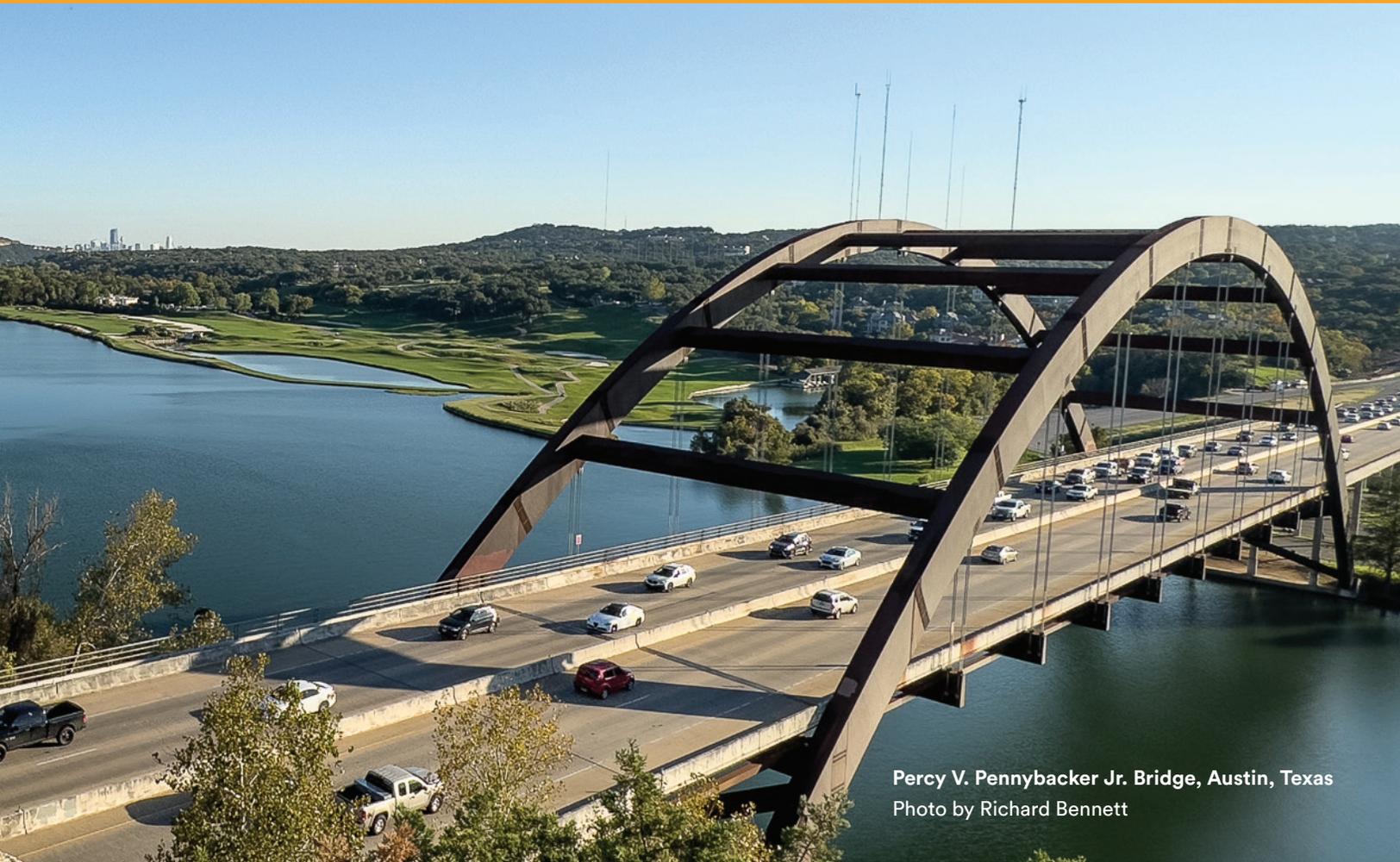


# The BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION OF AUSTIN BAPTIST CHURCH



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

VOL. 19 NO. 9

MARCH 4, 2026



**AUSTIN BAPTIST  
CHURCH**

LET THERE BE LIGHT

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# A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

ABC Family,

I find it interesting, as I write this on March 3, 2026, it happens to be the Jewish holiday of Purim. Purim is a joyous, Jewish festival celebrating the ending of an evil Persian plot to annihilate the Jews nearly five centuries before the first coming of Jesus Christ. This ancient genocidal plot was foiled through God's sovereign protection, as He worked miraculously through the help of Queen Esther (read the book of Esther for the full story).

Here we are nearly 2,500 years later and Israel still has enemies in Persia (modern day Iran). And once again, evil and repressive leadership in that nation has communicated their genocidal desire to annihilate Israel (and America). This desire has been well documented for decades since the Ayatollah took power in that historic land. However, with the recent elimination of Ayatollah Khomeini, the nation of Iran and the Middle Eastern region as a whole are at a consequential moment.

On this holiday of Purim, I am praying for God once again to protect Israel. But I am also praying for God to liberate the Iranian people and to open a wide door for Gospel advancement. After a more recent revolution in the nation of Egypt, our ministry partner, tC Egypt, has seen over 4,000 people come to know Jesus Christ these past 15 years. May God do a work like this once again now in the nation of Iran!

I encourage you to join me in prayer for the peace and security of Israel (Gen 12:2, Ps 122:6). But may we not forget to pray for the safety and salvation of the Iranian people. "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

I encourage you in a moment like this to be prayerful and not fearful. Read your Bibles, not just the news. Spend more time interceding than speculating. Are we in the last days? Yes, because God has already poured out His Spirit on us (Acts 2:17). Is Jesus about to return? No one knows (Matthew 24:36). We are simply called to be ready (Matthew 24:44) and be found faithful doing what He

told us to do (Matthew 28:18-20). May God protect our troops, guide our governing leaders, and may He be glorified through this season of turmoil.

**NOTE:** Some of you know I was scheduled to lead a group to Egypt this week. I was going to introduce church members to our ministry partner, TC Egypt, and I was going to train a couple hundred Middle Eastern pastors. We were planning then to embark on a special Bible tour throughout that incredible nation. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the trip due to safety concerns. The U.S. State Department issued a warning for Americans to evacuate 14 Middle Eastern nations, including Egypt. While I am disappointed, I do believe we made the wisest decision given the region's current volatility. I look forward to leading more groups back to the Middle East in the days to come to see Scripture come alive and experience the remarkable things God is doing.

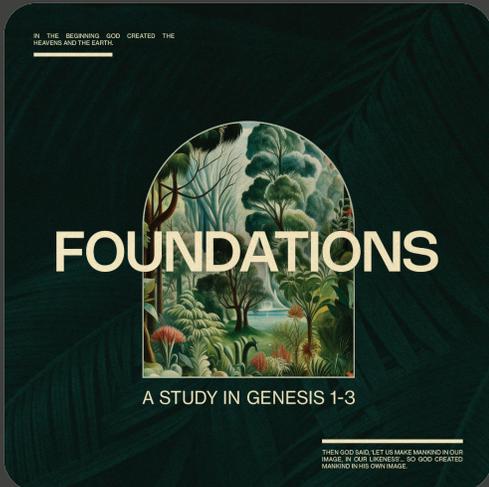
Bring a friend this Sunday, and I look forward to unpacking Genesis chapter three with you.

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 2, 2026



**Brian Furrow**

847-404-9375



**Michael Coffey**

936-870-7232

# CHURCHWIDE ANNOUNCEMENTS

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2026



**Andy & Emily Mayfield**  
with Charlie and Mary Claire



**Richard & Liza Taylor**



**Pawel & Nayeli  
Wysoczanski**

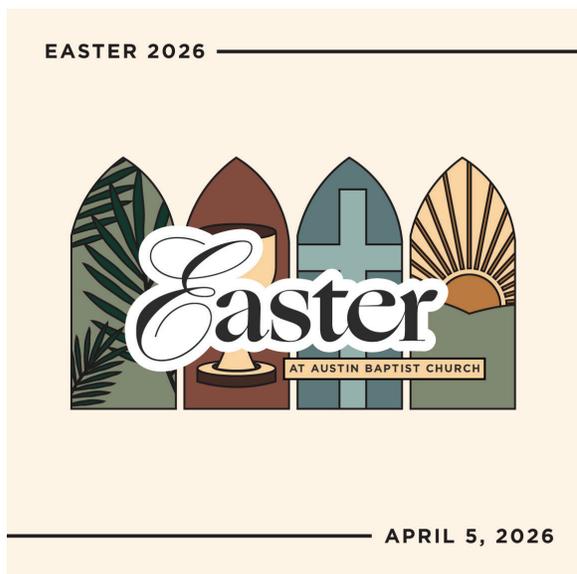
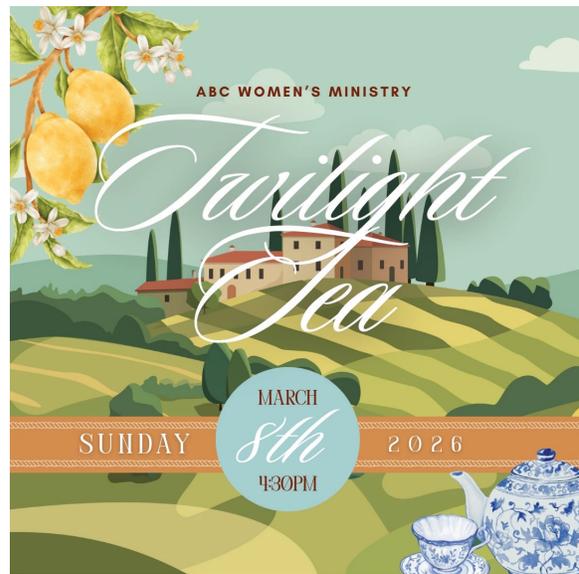


**LIGHT UP  
YOUR *Life***

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.

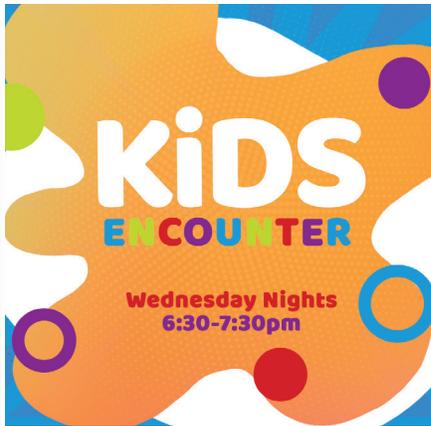
**MATTHEW 28:19-20**

# UPCOMING EVENTS



For all event and weekly activity information, please visit  
[austinbaptistchurch.com/EVENTS](http://austinbaptistchurch.com/EVENTS)

# WEEKLY REMINDERS



## MIDWEEK MENU

**NEXT WEEK'S MENU**  
MARCH 11

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

Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes,  
green beans, bread roll & salad bar

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

SHINING A LIGHT ON  
WHO JESUS REALLY IS

# ILLUMINATION STATION

JOHN 8:12

June 22nd-25th  
9am-12pm | K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade



 AUSTIN BAPTIST CHURCH

## IT'S TIME TO SAY YES TO VBS!

This year we are heading to Illumination Station for the brightest week of the year! During VBS, kids will explore all the ways Christ's light brightens, illuminates, reflects, and reveals through Bible study, games, crafts, and more.

This event is for children entering kindergarten through entering 5th grade for the 2026-2027 school year. This event is completely FREE to attend.

**REGISTRATION OPEN NOW FOR  
KIDS AND VOLUNTEERS!**

[austinbaptistchurch.com/VBS](http://austinbaptistchurch.com/VBS)

The ABC Worship Ministry invites kids entering 1st-6th grades to join us for Creative Arts Camp, July 20-24, 2026, from 9:00 AM-12:00pm each day.

Campers will learn and present the musical "Back to the Beginning," an exciting time-travel adventure back to Creation, where kids discover God's love, power, and victory over sin and death. Invite your family and friends to our special Friday evening performance on July 24th at 6:30pm as we share what we've learned!

In addition to preparing the musical, each child will choose a fun, creative arts elective like Arts & Crafts, Creative Movement, Graphic Design (4th-6th grade), Kids in the Kitchen, Percussion, Photography (4th-6th grade), Puppets, Singing, or Woodworking.



## Creative Arts Camp JULY 20-24, 2026

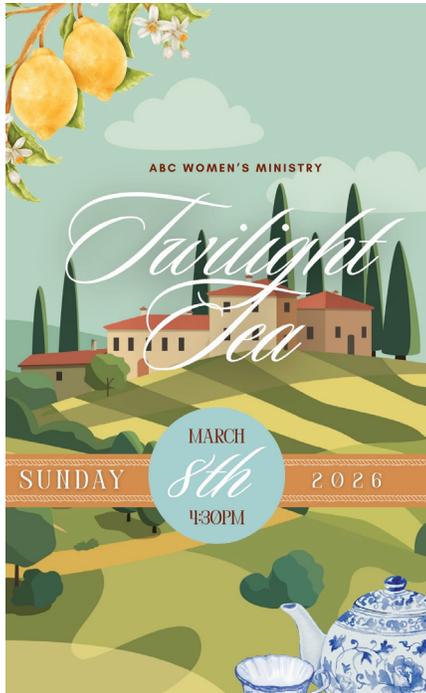
**REGISTRATION AND  
VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS  
OPEN NOW!**

[austinbaptistchurch.com/CreativeArtsCamp](http://austinbaptistchurch.com/CreativeArtsCamp)



# ABC Women's Ministry

WHERE EVERYONE HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE



## IT'S TEA TIME!

When you arrive at church on Sunday, you'll know right away... it's Twilight Tea time! As our church is transformed into an Italian countryside, my prayer is that hearts will be encouraged and knit together in love as we grow in knowing Jesus more.

Whether the Tea is "your thing" or not, I would truly treasure your prayers as we make our final preparations and welcome both our ABC women and guests from the community.

Church family, thank you for hosting such a beautiful gathering for the women of ABC and our community. What a gift this is.

**ANITA MCGINNIS**  
WOMEN'S MINISTER

Dallas Theological Seminary

## THE RESTED LEADER RETREAT

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

This past weekend several of our women on staff and other ministry leaders got to enjoy *The Rested Leader* retreat sponsored by Dallas Theological Seminary. To summarize what this day held for our leaders, I will pull from Dr. Amanda Banks.



### DR. AMANDA BANKS

DTS Director of Southwest for Distance Education



*We talk a lot about calling. But this weekend we talked about rest. Because somewhere along the way, many of us started believing exhaustion equals faithfulness. It doesn't.*

*God commands Sabbath. He cares about our bodies. He cares about our mental health. He cares about the*

*pace at which we live and lead. We can love the work and still lay it down. We can show up fully and still step away. We can serve faithfully and still choose to stop. Rest is not weakness. It's worship.*

*So grateful for a room full of women learning to answer both the call to serve and the call to rest.*

# Family Fun Fest

Friday, February 27, 2026



# Love Your Neighbor Food Drive

February 15 - March 1, 2026

Thank you to all who donated to the *Love Your Neighbor* Food Drive to bless our friends at the Baptist Community Center! This year, we collected 353 items, weighing in at 1,229 lbs. Thank you church family for your generosity and willingness to love your neighbor!



WEEK IN REVIEW



**291 Million**  
ARE ESTIMATED TO BE  
LIVING WITHOUT CHRIST  
IN NORTH AMERICA

**WEEK OF PRAYER: MARCH 1ST-8TH**

Annie Armstrong  
Easter Offering | North American  
Mission Board

**ABC'S GOAL**  
**\$15,000**  
FOR NATIONAL MISSIONS

### WHAT IS THE WEEK OF PRAYER?

During this week of March 1st-8th, SBC churches nationwide are observing the **Week of Prayer for North American Missions** by praying for missionaries, their ministries, and their families. These missionaries and church planters depend on your prayers to open hearts and help them disciple new believers. Visit [anniearmstrong.com/week-of-prayer](http://anniearmstrong.com/week-of-prayer) and see what and who you can be praying for specifically each day this week.



### WHAT IS THE ANNIE ARMSTRONG EASTER OFFERING?

The **Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO)** is the primary way Southern Baptist churches fund missions in North America. One hundred percent of gifts given to AAEO go towards supporting more than 3,000 missionary families serving across the United States and Canada.

This year, ABC has the goal of **\$15,000** towards this mission in conjunction with hundreds of SBC churches across North America. Giving towards this fund is **open now until Easter Sunday, April 5th**, at the link below.

Give online at  
[AUSTINBAPTISTCHURCH.COM/GIVE](http://AUSTINBAPTISTCHURCH.COM/GIVE)

# From the Pages of Bill's Notebook

My family had black labrador retrievers when I was growing up. The retrievers were intended to be duck hunting dogs but mainly became just pets. Heckle and Jeckle (named after the mischievous cartoon Magpies of the late 1950s) loved to run when released, each one trying to outdo the other. I once tried to outrun them down our front yard. I let them go and was running as hard as I could, but I was no match for my canine companions. They both clipped me at my knees when overtaking me, sending me into a bowling ball tumble into the Nandina bushes (our home was on a steep hill). Scraped and bruised, I then had to chase the dogs through the neighborhood and put them back in our yard. The Nandinas had a preteen-boy-sized indentation in them that would eventually grow back, but they were a reminder to me to be aware of where those dogs were when I was running. In that same yard, my toddler cousin would run down the hill full speed while laughing until his little legs couldn't keep up. He would fall headfirst and tumble, still laughing. My aunt would come and scoop him up and cover him in kisses. They would laugh and then do it again and again.

In the book of Deuteronomy, when Moses was reminding God's people that they should love and obey God and not turn away from Him to other gods, he says, "If you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you" (Deuteronomy 28:15 ESV). The imagery is of a fast and strong animal that outruns, attacks, and overwhelms its prey. Moses had also reminded them that good things would overwhelm them if they loved God and obeyed Him. He says, "All these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 28:2 ESV). But we all know what happened; the people were not able to obey and they were overtaken by their enemies, famine, and loss.

This is where the Good News comes in. God sends His Son, Jesus, who is completely righteous and His great love outruns us, overwhelms us, and overtakes us. He pursues us like a mother chasing a toddler then scooping us up, snuggling us close, and kissing our face. As we respond to Jesus and love Him back, we are overwhelmed by His blessings. Jesus reminds us, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me" (John 14:23-24 NIV).

I think I'd rather be overwhelmed by great blessings rather than curses. Obedience comes from our love of God, not the other way around. We can't religiously obey our way into loving God, but when we love God we will obey Him.

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

In His Joy,

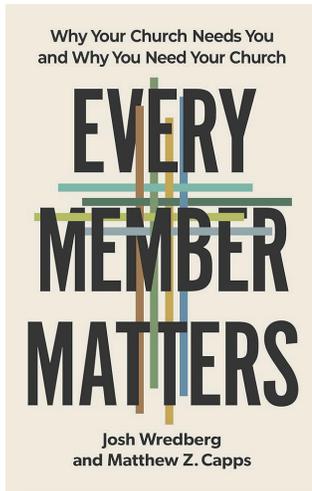
**BILL MCGINNIS**

**PASTOR OF CARE**





# ABC Library



## ***Every Member Matters: Why Your Church Needs You and Why You Need Your Church*** by Josh Wredberg & Matthew Z. Capps

Josh Wredberg serves as the lead pastor of Redeemer Community Church in Fuquay-Vana, North Carolina. He earned a doctorate in preaching from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. Wredberg founded Christ-Centered and Clear, a ministry that helps pastors to develop into better preachers. Matthew Z. Capps is the lead pastor at Fairview Baptist Church in Apex, North Carolina. He has a M.Div. with Biblical Languages from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a Ph.D. candidate at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia.

Most people are members of a gym, a big box store like Costco, an HOA, a book club, and even a church. Most of these memberships have things in common such as fees, attendance at meetings, options to join or leave, etc. One membership is not like any of the others; and that is church membership. Christians are commanded to join a local body of believers; it is not an option.

***Every Member Matters*** defines what church membership means and why it matters. The authors focus in-depth on all the roles of a church member. Every member is the following: a worshiper, a minister, a servant, a disciple-maker, a giver, an intercessor, and an ambassador. Many memberships have minimal requirements, and that is how some view church membership, but church attendance alone for a Christian does not provide impactful, meaningful membership. From the authors, "...when a church member recognizes and embraces who Jesus Christ has called them to be, when you see the awesome opportunity and privilege God has given you to use your roles to serve Him, then you will discover how useful and effective a tool you can be in the hands of the divine carpenter." The authors challenge you to become fully involved in a church and to take on, "greater levels of commitment and engagement in the mission of God."

**CONTACT: Rita Ervin**

Email [library@austinbaptistchurch.com](mailto:library@austinbaptistchurch.com)

or visit us online at [austinbaptistchurch.com/LIBRARY](http://austinbaptistchurch.com/LIBRARY)

**LIBRARY HOURS**

**SUNDAYS - 9:45AM-11:15AM**

**WEDNESDAYS - 5:00PM-7:30PM**

# OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

**ATTENDANCE** 03.01.2026

<b>8:45 AM WORSHIP</b> .....	<b>561</b>
<b>11:15 AM WORSHIP</b> .....	<b>336</b>
<b>BIBLE FELLOWSHIP</b> .....	<b>779</b>

**FINANCIAL REPORT** 03.01.2026

<b>ACCOUNT</b>	<b>MAR. 01, 2026</b>	<b>YTD</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	399,550.11	\$949,341.81
<b>DESIGNATED</b>	\$1,430.00	\$19,063.00
<b>LIGHT THE WAY - COMBINED</b>	\$12,345.08	\$239,643.13
<b>TOTAL GIVING</b>	\$413,325.19	\$1,208,047.94

## 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](http://austinbaptistchurch.com/TEAM)**

### **ABC PRAYER TEAM**

Email Bill McGinnis at **[billm@austinbaptistchurch.com](mailto:billm@austinbaptistchurch.com)**

### **FOR PUBLICATION CONSIDERATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Mariah Parker, Director of Communications

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- **CALL:** 512.334.8247

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



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