



**May your Christmas be a time to reflect on the simplicity of
Christ's birth and the magnitude of His Purpose.**

In the Shadow of the Steeple

-penned by a teen in Canton, Texas-

In the heart of our nation, the children cry.
And under thousands of our bridges, people die.
Yet, in the shadow of our steeples, Christians hide.
Afraid of the world outside.

The drunk on the corner doesn't even know his name.
But our Father who art in heaven
loves him still the same.
Paper sacks and cardboard boxes hold
the children that shiver inside.
Yet, in the shadows of our steeples, Christians hide.

People talk of foreign missions in villages all alone.
Yet we overlook the greatest mission, the one
that's here at home.

A young girl stands on a street corner,
hoping there will be someone to care.
But no one stops to help her even though
they see her there.
And still in the shadow of our steeples,
Christians hide.

So, I ask you now, church people -
Will you be the one to care?
To help those people, or will you be caught
hiding in the shadow of your steeple?



Thanksgiving Is a Lifestyle

I was privileged to worship with my family this past Sunday at FBC, Tyler, and heard my pastor, Pike Wisner, preach a wonderful Thanksgiving message. He coined a word I had never heard before, GratiTosity, which amused the congregation. It is derived from the combination of gratitude and generosity. He delivered an excellent sermon encouraging us to focus our minds and hearts on the real purpose of the Thanksgiving holiday. He stated that both words are so very complementary and that they go to the heart of what it really means to be a Christian. Especially when we find ourselves in a difficult or depressing situation, the best thing we can do is pray and ask the Lord to help us seek out and minister to someone who is in need. Focusing on others, besides oneself, is the best way to put one's witness to its best use. Jesus was, is, and will always be the best example of GratiTosity as He freely gave of Himself, even death on a cruel cross! How is it that believers can be so inwardly and selfishly focused that thinking only of those within their closed circle is the only thing worth their time, energy, and resources? It is my prayer that every SBA believer is passionate, with an attitude of gratitude and generosity. Such attitudes become a commitment that results in a lifestyle that He can use to change the world. A life of thankfulness becomes a life filled with praise and fulfillment. Serving others is one of the main founding blocks of building a meaningful Thanksgiving Holiday. May GratiTosity be utmost and ever-present in the minds of the SBA Family, not just during this heartwarming season, but in every season of the year!

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name." Psalm 100:4

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... and be thankful." Colossians 3:15

It was a blessing to join the Faith Baptist Church family for the SBA Dedication and Deed Acceptance of their newly acquired facilities in Owentown. Dr. Maurice McMillion shared the great news that nine people had joined the church earlier that morning. Dr. Danny Pickens delivered a wonderful dedication message, and everyone enjoyed a great celebration day!

I also wish to express my appreciation to the Hispanic pastors and their wives for the invitation to join them at their end-of-year luncheon. Lynne and I were very blessed to be with you.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving,
Brother David
Interim Director of Missions

November 30-December 7, 2025

TOGETHER

\$210 Million Goal

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.



DEC 2025



December 2 - Chris Legg - South Spring BC (12-2-2011)
Kenward Goode - East Lake BC (12-2-1990)

December 5 - Warren Ethridge - The Woods BC (Birthday)

December 8 - Administrative Team Meeting

December 24 - Mike Morrow - Cross Brand Church (Birthday)

December 25 - CHRISTMAS DAY (Jesus' Birthday)

December 31 - New Year's Eve

JAN2026



January 1 - New Year's Day

January 7 - Eric Switzer - Sharon BC (Birthday)

January 9 - Frank Zie - Ig. Bautista Broadway (1-9-12)

January 12 - Administrative Team Meeting

January 15 - Tim Brown - FBC Whitehouse (Birthday)

January 23 - Jason Rhodes- Daybreak HOD Church (birthday)

January 25 - Andrew O'Kelley - Calvary BC (Birthday)

January 26 - Steven Young - The Cross BC (1-26-09)

*Merry Christmas & a Very Happy New Year!
from the Staff at Smith Baptist Association*

David L. Jones

Paula Pickens, Sue Sexton, and Jamie Hawbaker

The office will be closed

*December Dec. 24 - January 4, 2026. The office will open on
Monday, January 4, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.*

**Sammy Joe Calhoun & Martha Jean Calhoun
Family Scholarship for Ministerial studies.
Deadline is 3-1-2026.**

High School Residency - graduating senior or graduate public, private high school, homeschool. Preference is given to individuals that are a member in good standing of the Smith Baptist Association.

GPA - at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale

College/University Attending - May attend any accredited college or university in Texas.

College Major - a field related to ministerial studies that would prepare them for a career in the ministry.

Financial - FAFSA required

Length of Support - Renewable for up to 3 years or until the degree program is completed for a total of 4 years.



<https://etcf.org/scholarships/available-scholarships/>

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Taught by professors with both academic and practical ministry experience, the certificate program provides a foundational theological education accessible in East Texas. Whether preparing to teach a Bible study or personally exploring Scripture, the courses equip students with the resources and knowledge necessary to effectively communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2026 SPRING COURSES

- Mins 1118 - Christian Witness
- Mins 1121 - Interpretation of the Bible for Preaching and Teaching
- Mins 1126 - Introduction to Missions

Green Acres Baptist Church • 1607 Troup Hwy. • Tyler, TX 75701
\$125 per course (includes BGCT scholarship) or \$50 course audit fee
Dr. Danny Pickens - Coordinator/Instructor



Learn more at ETBU.edu/CLM | 903.923.2180 | christianstudies@ETBU.edu

**MESSENGERS OF SBA: A note regarding the
Proposed 2026 Budget that has been mailed
out, please return the Voting Card that was
enclosed with the Proposed 2026 Budget
to the SBA office no later than Monday,
December 1, 2025, 4:30 p.m. Thank you.**

SMITH COUNTY BAPTIST MINISTER SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship was created through the generosity of a donor who was the child of a Baptist minister. This scholarship will be awarded to dependent children of ordained Baptist ministers serving congregations in Smith County, Texas, that are members of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

This scholarship is awarded for one year. Recipients may reapply as long as their parent remains a Smith County Baptist Minister.

The following will be required with your on-line application:

- A screenshot of your high school or current college transcript.
- One reference completed by a teacher who has in-classroom experience with you and a character reference.
- A letter from your church stating that your parent is an ordained minister serving a congregation that is in Smith County, and a member of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

You can start your application process at:

www.etcf.org/scholarships/available-scholarships

Questions?

**East Texas Communities Foundation
903.533.0208 or 1.866.533.3823**

Application opens January 1, 2026 & closes March 1, 2026



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SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP

Faithful with every resource, intentional with every decision. Our model reinvests in long-term strength for today's ministries and tomorrow's.

MEMBERSHIP ADVANTAGES

- Great rates and coverage from a dependable partner
- Discounted rates for TXB CP partnering churches
- Free membership to MinistrySafe & risk training

**COVERAGE BUILT TO SUPPORT
YOUR CALLING, NOT COMPETE
WITH IT**

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Contact TBIP for a more resilient, faith-aligned approach to insurance:

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tbip.org

info@kingscover.com



Messenger 2025 Voting Card

**Voting card must be returned to 3226 Old Jacksonville Hwy.
Tyler, Texas 75701 by close of business on
Monday, December 1, 2025.**

2026 SBA Proposed Budget

Approve Disapprove

I request an appointment with the Administrative Team on Monday, December 8, 2025 at 1 p.m. I will contact the SBA office to confirm my appointment.

Name _____

Phone _____

Church _____