



# Celebration

THE SPIRIT. THE SONGS. THE STORY.

DECEMBER 12-15, 2013

HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



# MERRY CHRISTMAS

## & WELCOME TO HOUSTON'S FIRST!

Of all the possible traditions that families can follow at this time of year, there's one that's shared by almost all of us — regardless of where we live, the size of our family, how much or how little we have, or even our spiritual beliefs.

It's the family photo. From formal portraits with perfect lighting and matching outfits to hastily gathered groups of reluctant squirming kids, these annual snapshots can become as cherished as the hand-made ornaments hanging on the tree.

Over time, they serve as a visual record of our family's history. Look past the dated hairstyles and fashions and you'll see from year to year the changes in the family — children are born, in-laws are added, loved ones are lost.

Although we don't have a photograph from the very first Christmas, we have a mental snapshot from the day. There's a humble father doing his best to provide, a loving mother pondering what was to come, and a newborn child whose birth brought a change to this young family — and to all eternity.

Now, take a second look at that image. Do you see yourself? You may not be there in a festive holiday sweater, but you most certainly are there. You'll find yourself in the heart of that baby boy — Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

The Bible says in John 3:16-17 that God showed His love for the world — for you and me — by giving us His One and Only Son “so that everyone who

believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” He did not send Jesus to condemn the world. He sent Him to save us. We were on His mind in that very first Christmas snapshot.

As you experience *Celebration*, our prayer is that you would be reminded of what God did for us at that family gathering in Bethlehem and in the many scenes to follow throughout Jesus' life. For some of our guests, *Celebration* will provide an introduction to this beautiful story of grace, mercy, forgiveness, salvation — and love.

If you want to know more about this story, I invite you to connect with Houston's First Baptist Church or any other Bible-believing church. Ask questions, seek answers, and get to know the Savior born on that first Christmas.

My prayer is that when you take your next family photo, Jesus will be there, too.

Merry Christmas!

*Pastor Gregg Matte*

**GREGG MATTE** PASTOR  
HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



## MEET THE TEAMS THAT MAKE CELEBRATION POSSIBLE

### CELEBRATION TEAM LEADERS

Casting & Personnel Director	Marsha Taylor
Fabrication Director	Ned Vardeman
Assistant Fabrication Director	Kim Gustafson
Choreography Director	Lezlie Callaway
Costuming Director	Diane Bagby
Make-Up Director	Julia Wright
Prop Room Coordinator	Annella Taylor
Stage Managers	Peggy Bain
	Tony Herbert
Stage Captains	Lisa Calvert
	Jennifer Stockstill
	Julia Wright
Decorations	Cathy Clemons
	Tara Morgan
	Star Smith
Assistant to ... Everything!	Mark Bradley
Program Photography	Jack Potts
Ushers / Greeters	Becky Murphy
Merchandise Sales	Cindy Robinson
Hospitality	Terri Spadt

### WORSHIP MINISTRY

Minister of Worship & Arts	John Bolin
Minister of Music / Bands & Singers	Ryan Langford
Associate Director of Music / Choir & Orchestra	Jill Hofer
Associate Director of Music / Bands & Singers	Michael Brady
Associate Director of Music / Downtown	Sam Jones
Worship Associate - Student Worship	Josh Harris
Office Manager / Administrative Assistant	Dana Haddad
Orchestra Director	Chris Reidlinger
High 5 Kids' Choir Director	Joy Harris
School of Fine Arts Administrator	Nancy Pollard
Worship Ministry Intern	Philip Skinner

### GATHERING TEAM

Gathering Pastor	Stephen Smith
Director of Gathering Operations	Dean-na Warner
Special Programs Associate	Cathy Clemons

### THE CHOIR AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

Director	John Bolin
Associate Director / Pianist	Jill Hofer
President	David Taylor
Vice President	Fredna Manney
Special Assistants	Kay Allen
	Terry Cline
	Dana Dawkins
	Debbie Smith
	Annella Taylor
	Sharrie Wartell

### THE ORCHESTRA AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

Director	Chris Reidlinger
President	Alex Hinojosa
Pianist	Pat Lilley
In-House Orchestrator	Tim Timpani

### HIGH 5 KIDS' CHOIR

Director	Joy Harris
Assistant Director	Paige Bolin
	Kristen Hawkinson
	Raegan Hodges
	Marla Jackson

### PRODUCTION

Director	Nick Rosenbaum
Audio	Yoshi Haddad
	Dallas King
Video	Brett Laxton
	Josh Spires
Lighting Team Director	Ryan Benson
Video Team Director	Lance Ferrell
Administrative Assistant	Casey Nelson

### COMMUNICATIONS

Director	Steven W. Murray
Associate Director	Jesse Jackson
Communications Associate	Rebecca Dalton
Account Manager	Krissy MacKenzie
Project Manager	Carrie Monzon
Web Associate	Nguyen Nguyen
Office Manager	Alison Moody
Senior Designer	Josh Alexander
	Mark Nasso
Designers	Andrew Finney
	Ilana Tehran
	Christopher Wilson

### CORNER BOOKS

Director	Mary Ellen Buchanan
Ministry Assistant	Mary Beth Loughran
Corner Books Assistant	Elizabeth Feagin
Librarian	Ann Zallar

### KEY CAST

Bing Crosby	Jason Seifert
George Bailey	David Taylor
ZuZu Bailey	Mikayla Wulf
Mary Bailey	Jennifer Stockstill
Uncle Billy Bailey	Dennis Delaughter
Harry Bailey	David Gober
Mother Bailey	Dana Haddad
Bert the Policeman	Carl Crawford
The Grinch	Aaron Jordan
Cindy Loo Who	Julia Stewart
Santa Claus	Himself
Conductor of the Polar Express	Philip Skinner
Buddy the Elf	Brian Buxton
Charlie Brown	Andrew Moore
Linus van Pelt	Logan Cunningham
Lucy van Pelt	Callie Hodges

Special thanks to Aerial Experience Productions (AerialExperience.com)



## THE SPIRIT

THE SOUND OF CHRISTMAS OVERTURE

CHRISTMAS IN THE AIR

IT'S A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

HOLIDAY INN MEDLEY

*Jason Seifert, solo*

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

AULD LANG SYNE

THE GRINCH MEDLEY

*David Smith, Maria Estrella, Misti Steen, Lacy Tushnet, Aaron Jordan, Madison Smith, Blake McMahon, soloists (in order of appearance)*

THE CHARACTERS OF CHRISTMAS MEDLEY

*Hailey Vickich, Lucy Holden, James Crawford, Stephen Smith, soloists (in order of appearance)*

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS

SOMEWHERE IN MY MEMORY

*Landry Crawford, soloist*

THE POLAR EXPRESS

HOT CHOCOLATE!

THE NUTCRACKER SUITE

CHRISTMASTIME IS HERE

WHITE CHRISTMAS FINALE

*Jason Seifert, soloist*

## THE SONGS

SING WE NOW OF CHRISTMAS

I SAW THREE SHIPS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

*with* JOY TO THE WORLD!

A CELTIC CHRISTMAS

MIRACULUM

*Michael Brady, guitarist*

*Elisabeth Hale, Long Le, Beth El Montgomery, Alisa Pederson, strings*

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING-A-LONG

O HOLY NIGHT

## THE STORY

IN THE BEGINNING

ONE DAY

*Benjamin Bolin, soloist*

WHERE ART THOU?

*David Gober, Carl Crawford, Dana Dawkins, Jeff Stas, Benjamin Bolin, soloists (in order of appearance)*

THE PROMISE

*Elizabeth Trask, David Lee, soloists*

FOR A MOMENT

*Joy Harris, soloist*

AT LAST

*Paul Ragsdale, Ryan Langford, James Crawford, soloists (in order of appearance)*

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?

*Cindy Robinson, soloist*

SEEING FIRST HAND

JESUS SAVES *with* THE PROMISE FINALE

IT'S A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS REPRISE





# TAKE THE MUSIC HOME WITH YOU

AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS, TOO!

We are excited to offer various projects this year featuring artists from *Celebration*. Visit the Main Foyer, Corner Books, or stations throughout the church to take the music home with you or to give them as gifts this Christmas!

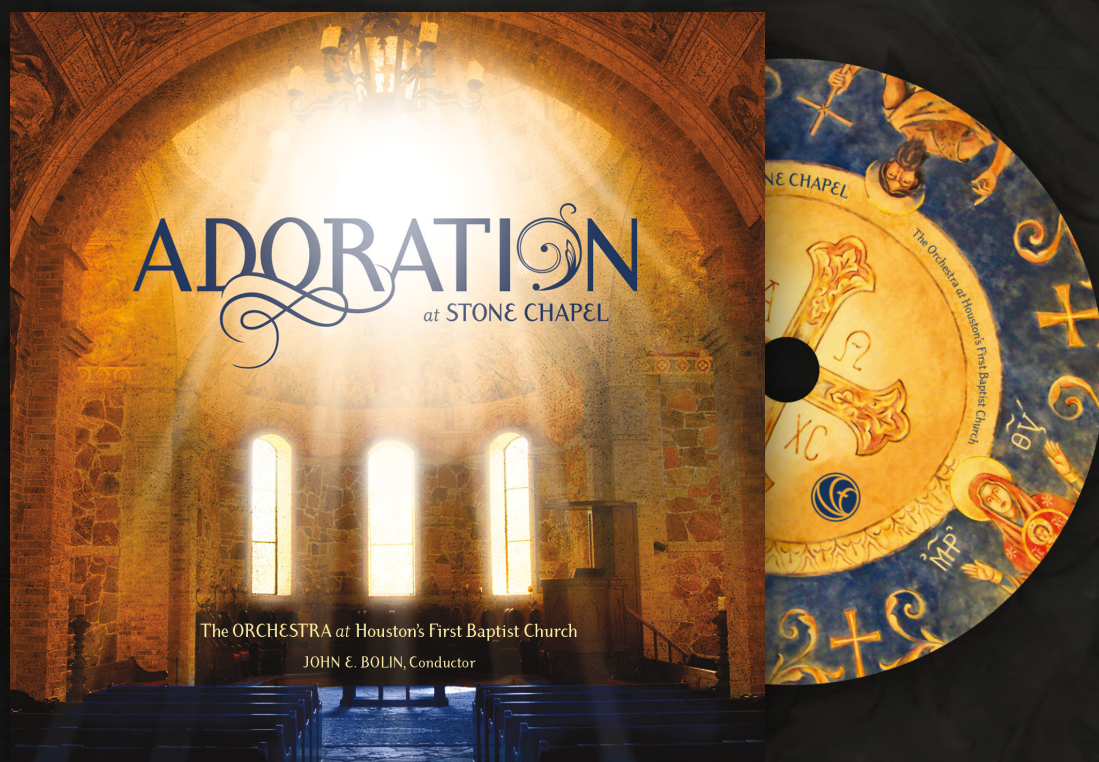
## ADORATION at STONE CHAPEL JUST RELEASED IN NOVEMBER 2013

The Orchestra provides music for reflection and prayer on this new album recorded at Stone Chapel at Lanier Theological Library and Houston's First Baptist Church

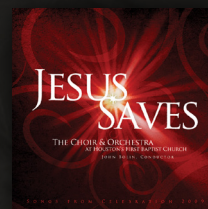
**\$12 EACH**

or

**BUY 5, GET 1 FREE**



## MUSIC FROM CELEBRATION



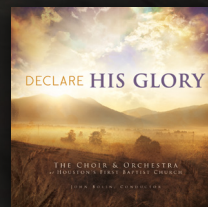
2009



2010

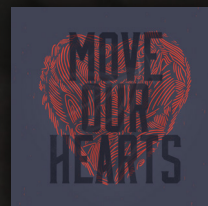


2012



### DECLARE HIS GLORY (2012)

This non-seasonal album features some of the favorite songs of the Choir & Orchestra at Houston's First Baptist Church



### MOVE OUR HEARTS (2013)

The Bands & Singers at Houston's First Baptist Church present original songs written and performed by members of our worship team



**ABOVE CDS \$10**

...

**SOUVENIR MUG \$8**

### 4 PACK BUNDLE FOR \$35

**ANY FOUR CDS**

or

**ANY THREE CDS PLUS MUG**

## OTHER RESOURCES TO ENJOY AND GIVE



**The Bolin Brothers**  
The debut album by John, Benjamin and Joseph Bolin.

**\$12**



**Star Smith**  
Worship songs for Preschoolers. A great resource that points young hearts to God.

**\$12 (CD or DVD)**

**\$20 (Bundle Pack)**

# A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM JOHN BOLIN

Greetings and a very Merry Christmas to all of you!

What a privilege it is to officially welcome you to *Celebration*! We have been singing, playing, working, planning, creating, and preparing for months. Now we add the final element — you! That's right, we've been waiting for you! You, the audience, are what truly makes *Celebration* so special. The interaction and excitement you bring when you walked through the door, accompanied by the connection that I know you will soon experience with the Spirit, the Songs, and the Story of Christmas, truly make this a magical event that you will not soon forget. So sit back, interact, laugh, remember, enjoy, and experience our Christmas gift to you.

What you are about to witness is the effort of hundreds of people who have given countless hours to make this a reality. Please direct your attention to the "Meet the Team" page of this program on page 3 to see just a few of the team members. *Celebration* is completely a team effort and would not happen without all of these incredibly talented people. But before I go on, I must thank a few particular groups of people. First, I'd like to thank the Choir and Orchestra along with their leadership team. Words cannot express how proud I am of this particular group. They are the backbone of *Celebration* and not only give a live soundtrack to the entire evening but provide the music that brings the greatest story ever told to life.

To the FIRST|WORSHIP Staff and Director's Team, thank you for listening to this Director's crazy ideas and making them become a reality. No one will ever

know how much work you have put into this production. However, I love that it comes from a heart of worship and a sacrifice to the Lord. You are the best!

And finally, to my incredible wife, Paige, and daughter Grace: You are the unsung heroes of *Celebration*. You give up so much during the year for this to happen. Thank you for not enduring, but embracing. Thank you for not just suspecting, but imagining, and thank you for not just surviving but truly thriving in this journey with me. You are my girls, and I love you so much.

As many of you have heard by now, *Celebration* will take a hiatus in 2014. Please take a few minutes and turn to page 9 where it explains how the Lord has led us to this decision. On one hand, because of our love for *Celebration*, it was a very difficult decision to make. On the other hand, because of our greater love for the Lord and His will over our lives, it was a very simple and easy decision to make. But let me assure you, we will be back in 2015 with an even more exciting *Celebration*. See you then!

Now, it's time to begin. I humbly ask that you do not just be a spectator during this performance, but that you would get wrapped up in all the sights and sounds and become a participant. Then, you will truly experience what is so special about *Celebration* and hopefully leave different than when you came. Ready? Let's do this.

**JOHN E. BOLIN** MINISTER OF  
WORSHIP & ARTS





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW LONG IS THE PERFORMANCE?

*Celebration* runs approximately 2 hours with no intermission. Please use the restroom before we begin!

## WHAT IF I NEED TO LEAVE DURING THE PERFORMANCE?

For your safety and the courtesy of those around you, please remain in your seat during the performance. Cast members, props, set pieces, and live animals are in the aisles at moments throughout the show. If you must leave for an emergency, Ushers may ask you to remain in “holding seats” until it is safe to return to your seat.

## ARE CAMERAS ALLOWED?

Flash photography and video cameras are not permitted during the performance. However, you are welcome to take photos with other cameras. If you do, share them on social media with #Celebration13!

## WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?

You may have noticed a construction area on the north side of our campus along the I-10 frontage road. Houston's First is building a new landmark featuring a 30' water wall and a 60' cross. Debuting in April 2014, the structure will symbolize the living water available through Jesus Christ (John 7:38). Along with this project, Houston's First is partnering with Living Water International (water.cc) to provide funding for a new water well each year going forward.

## WHERE IS THE ELEPHANT?

Our friend Page, the elephant, had a previous commitment and is not able to be with us this year. However, several of her animal friends are here — including ones never before seen at *Celebration*! Keep your eyes open!



# WE'RE TAKING A HIATUS IN 2014, BUT *CELEBRATION* RETURNS IN 2015!

This decision was not initiated on our own, nor has it been made lightly. The process has taken months to unfold as God revealed His plan to *Celebration* leaders — and as we came to terms with where He was leading our church.

In a nutshell, *Celebration* is taking a hiatus in 2014 on what would have been its seventh year of production.

Those familiar with the Bible will see the spiritual significance of that timing. Throughout God's Word, there are instances where God tells people to rest in the seventh year. In fact, God modeled that from the very beginning when He rested on the seventh day in Genesis 2:1-3.

But there is more to this next chapter of our story than just that. Fittingly, as we look at how God has led us to take this hiatus in our seventh year, we have discovered seven benefits and reasons for doing so:

## 1 • OBEDIENCE TO GOD

Quite simply, we are being obedient to what God has called us to do as a church. When God leads, we follow. On another level, the hiatus is an example of following the command God gave the Israelites to take a Sabbath year every seven years (Leviticus 25:2-5).

## 2 • IT SHOWS GOD'S OWNERSHIP

*Celebration* is not ours. It is God's. When we tithe, it reminds us that God owns all that we have. We give to Him a portion of what He has given to us. In a similar way, this hiatus offers back to Him the musical we treasure so dearly. It's not ours to keep to ourselves.

## 3 • IT SHOWS THE WORLD WE ARE A DISTINGUISHED PEOPLE

God told His people to do certain things in the Bible in order to set them apart from the world. The goal was for them to live in a way that others would ask, “Why?” God knows that when a church takes a hiatus from its Christmas production, people will ask, “Why?” We look forward to that question. The answer will point people straight to Him.

## 4 • GOD WORKS WHILE WE REST

When God's people rest, God does not! Taking a hiatus shows our reliance and trust in God to do a work through us. He will be working in ways we can and cannot see leading up to our production in 2015. There is a difference between dead time and active space on our calendars. We see the year ahead as active space in which God will be up to something — in our cast and crew, our church family, and our city.

## 5 • IT GIVES REST TO THE LAND

Our city and our church community are our “land.” They can both be overworked just like a farmer's fields can be. Even though *Celebration* has great variety every year in its production, theatrical elements, and music, God has put into place His timing and pacing to protect our land so that it remains eager and excited for the future.

## 6 • IT GIVES REST TO THE LIVESTOCK

In our context, our “livestock” are the 800+ people who make *Celebration* happen. (Of course, we treat them much nicer than cows and donkeys!) The Lord calls us to take a day of rest one day a week. Like what that one day does for us personally, taking a hiatus with *Celebration* will strengthen us for the following year. If we wait until we need a sabbatical, it's too late.

## 7 • IT GIVES OPPORTUNITY TO MEET OTHER NEEDS

During the years when the people of God were not allowed to plow their land in the Old Testament, a small harvest would still come from the seeds that had fallen the previous year. The poor were allowed to gather this food to provide for their families. It was God's way of providing for a need that may not have been fulfilled had the farmers plowed and harvested their fields. In our church's context, there are some capital improvement needs at The Loop Campus. *Celebration* would prevent us from taking on these projects since they would interfere with the show and our ability to host the over 18,000 people who experience it each year.

Gregg Matte, our Pastor at Houston's First, models the sabbatical rhythm of life by taking a one-month sabbatical each summer. He uses those four weeks very intentionally. They are not a break from God, but a break with God. His mornings are spent praying, reading, and studying as he prepares for the year ahead at our church. The afternoons are spent enjoying time with his family.

“While we will miss *Celebration* in 2014, I cannot wait to see what God has in store for 2015 — and what He will show us between now and then,” says Pastor Gregg. “Our vision as a church is to be a relevant biblical community. In that phrase, you'll see that the Bible is at the center of who we want to be. So, I am proud of our *Celebration* leaders for placing priority on God's calling and what He has led our church to do. There is no better place to be than right in the middle of God's will.”

And according to the director of *Celebration*, that's exactly where his team is.

“Although taking a hiatus was one of the hardest decisions my staff and I have ever had to make, I am confident that it was the right one,” says John Bolin, Minister of Worship & Arts at Houston's First. “When God tells you to do something, you do it. Period.”

“Fortunately, this decision was made not on a tired or weary heart,” Bolin continued. “We are thrilled about this year's show, and we have had great energy and delight going into *Celebration* 2013. I truly believe it's the strongest show yet, including theatrical elements never seen before at Houston's First. While we look forward to sharing *Celebration* with Houston this year, we also look forward to what's in store for *Celebration* in 2015!”

# COMING UP AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

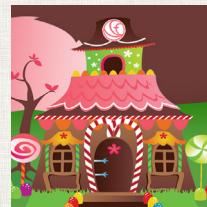
Visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) for more about these and other upcoming opportunities!



## CHRISTMAS EVE

Tue, Dec 24 — The Loop and Tin Hall

Prepare your heart for Christ's arrival as we usher in Christmas Day at three candlelight worship services. Gather at The Loop Campus at 4p or 6p, or at Tin Hall in Cypress at 4p.



## CANDY CANE LANE

Fri, Dec 20 @ 6-8p and Sat, Dec 21 @ 10a-1p — The Loop

A free Christmas festival for kids through 5th grade featuring One Starry Night — an interactive biblical experience! A special area just for Preschoolers is available on Saturday, too.



## SUMMIT NEW YEAR'S EVE

Tue, Dec 31 @ 9p-1a — Toyota Center

Young single adults will welcome the New Year at a private party featuring music, food, games, and more. Come early at 6p and watch the Houston Rockets take on the Sacramento Kings.





# School of Fine Arts

AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

The mission of the School of Fine Arts is to equip people to glorify God through the arts. SoFA offers instruction for children and adults — beginners or experts — in many disciplines to develop each student's God-given talents and abilities to their fullest potential for service in ministry, their profession, or simply for personal enjoyment.

## OUR STAFF

Students benefit from the highest quality education in music and the arts with instruction from Christian professionals and artists. SoFA instructors hold degrees from accredited colleges and universities and have considerable experience either in the performance arena or the field of education – or both. These high standards of excellence extend to their personal lives, too. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/SoFA](http://HoustonsFirst.org/SoFA) for bios on our teachers and staff.

## SEE WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

“Words alone cannot express the gratitude that I have for SoFA. Not only have they helped my family in difficult times by issuing a scholarship to my daughter, but by assuring that her dreams keep on living. For this I am grateful and blessed!” — **A very appreciative and grateful mom**

“We have three kids taking music lessons — two in piano and one in guitar. They have enjoyed getting to know their instructors as they have been very encouraging, and they even choose to practice at home without much prompting! As a mom, I have appreciated the help and cooperation in scheduling all three at times that fit our family best.” – **Michelle**

“I have two children enrolled at SoFA. My daughter is gaining confidence in herself as she learns to play the piano. My son is learning to use his voice while pursuing his dream of becoming a worship leader. We are blessed to be a part of SoFA. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of such a great program.” – **Jennifer**

## PRIVATE INSTRUCTION AVAILABLE IN:

- Piano
- Voice
- Brass
- Woodwinds
- Strings
- Percussion
- Guitar – electric, acoustic and bass

## GROUP INSTRUCTION AVAILABLE IN:

- Photography
- Drama

## SoFA SNAPSHOT

- Located inside Houston's First Baptist Church at The Loop (Level 2)
- Convenient hours during the day, most evenings and on Saturdays
- State of the art teaching studio/practice rooms designed by an acoustical engineer
- Closed circuit cameras in each room monitored by the administrator and security officers
- Homework station for students while waiting for their lessons
- Two faculty concerts and two student recitals each year



**SoFA**  
HOUSTON'S FIRST

# MISSION 1:8

**“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

— **Acts 1:8**

In March 2013, Houston's First launched MISSION 1:8 — a two-year initiative to expand our church family's financial generosity.

The goal is to support our current ministry while multiplying our missional endeavors to the poor, widows, orphans, and prisoners, and to our city, our nation, and our world.

Houston's First has numerous strategic partnerships with local, national, and global ministries, and sponsors between 30 and 40 mission trips each year. As part of MISSION 1:8, we are giving additional emphasis to targeted areas here at home and around the world.

**Through MISSION 1:8, Houston's First will increase our overall giving to missional endeavors from 22% to 41% of our annual budget.**

## OUR CITY

Reach the greater Houston area with the Gospel -- primarily through campuses based upon our Multisite Signature

- Cypress
- Downtown
- Sienna

## OUR NATION

Partner with churches and ministries to extend God's kingdom in three strategic regions across the United States

- New York City
- New England
- San Francisco

## OUR WORLD

Partner with churches and ministries to extend God's kingdom in three strategic regions across the globe

- Rio de Janeiro
- Madrid
- East Asia

## POOR, WIDOWS, ORPHANS, AND PRISONERS

Give 10% of the increase in our budget to ministries dedicated to helping these groups. Ministries who have already received funds include:

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Generation One               | • As Our Own (India)             |
| • Star of Hope                 | • His Cherished Ones (Kenya)     |
| • Houston Habitat for Humanity | • Into Abba's Arms (Kenya)       |
| • Living Water International   | • Mike Eden Ministries (Kenya)   |
| • Mission:Dignity              | • The Harbor (Russia)            |
| • WorkFaith Connection         | • Village of Hope (Guatemala)    |
| • C.H.A.R.M. Prison Ministries | • Romanian Christian Enterprises |

Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/MISSION18](http://HoustonsFirst.org/MISSION18) for details about our partnerships in the strategic areas listed above, our Multisite Signature for Houston-area campuses, and more about this two-year initiative.





HOUSTON'S FIRST  
BAPTIST CHURCH

T H E F I R S T C H R I S T M A S . O R G



LIKE CELEBRATION AT [FACEBOOK.COM/HFBCCELEBRATION](https://www.facebook.com/HFBCCELEBRATION)



SHARE YOUR CELEBRATION EXPERIENCE USING [#CELEBRATION13](https://twitter.com/HFBCCELEBRATION)

FIRST | WORSHIP



THE CHOIR & ORCHESTRA  
AT HOUSTON'S FIRST



THE HANDBELLS  
AT HOUSTON'S FIRST



School of Fine Arts  
AT HOUSTON'S FIRST