

# Irving church plants seeds of faith around the world

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IRVING—Desiring to make a global impact for Christ, [First Baptist Church](#) in Irving recently sent mission teams to Bangladesh, India, North Korea, Uganda, Honduras, Nicaragua and China, as well as St. Louis and Houston.



Janet James from First Baptist Church in Irving holds a baby in Bangladesh.

“It has been a strong year of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth,” said Pastor John Durham, who served on several of the mission trips.

While sharing the gospel in Mongolia, First Baptist partnered with [LifeQwest Inter-national](#), an outreach of Change the World Ministries. Jerry and Susan Smith, members of [Bear Creek Baptist Church](#) in Katy, founded the ministry specifically to help abandoned street children by meeting both their physical and spiritual needs.

“There is such a powerful ministry happening there, and we were honored to partner with them in that frontier nation,” Durham said.

“We were able to help with some work projects, including pouring concrete for sidewalks for the orphans, filling potholes on their property, painting some of their buildings, gardening and organizing their medical supplies.

Durham walked 30 minutes each way and crossed two rivers to purchase goats and sheep for the orphanage. He had been given money to purchase the livestock from [GiveAnAnimal.com](#), an organization started by Cody Caudill, a member of First Baptist in Irving who currently serves as a naval

officer.



Pastor John Durham of First Baptist Church in Irving picks out some calves for the orphanage funded by GiveAnAnimal.com, an organization created by a member of the Irving congregation.

“Every time I go to Mongolia, I come home so humbled,” said Susan Etter, who returned to Mongolia after a trip two years ago. “Our team truly believes that when we travel halfway around the world to work with these missionaries, our job while there is to do whatever they need for us to do—no questions asked. We are there to serve.”

In February, First Baptist in Irving plans to host four young men from Mongolia who are a part of The Mustangs, a mentorship program with LifeQwest Ministries. The church hopes to collect donated American Airlines miles for their trip. Following their experience in Texas, all four men will return to Mongolia and continue ministering to others in their homeland.

First Baptist also sent a women’s team to Bangladesh. This was a dream fulfilled for Missions Coordinator Allison James, who joined the church staff in 2009 after serving in Bangladesh two years.

“I thoroughly enjoyed being able to interact with the girls at the Light of Hope Center and teaching them about Queen Esther. The girls at this center are some of the poorest children in the world,” James said.



John Durham, pastor of First Baptist Church in Irving, is joined by four young men who will be traveling to Texas in February from the Mustangs, a mentorship program with LifeQwest Ministries. First Baptist in Irving hopes to raise 280,000 donated American Airlines miles for their trip.

“Yet they have hope, because they have heard God’s word and realize it’s the truth. Not every child can say this, and these girls are truly blessed through this center. It was encouraging and uplifting to spend time with them, loving on them and laughing with them.”

This summer, members of the middle school ministry served in Houston. Students participated in a variety of service projects, including serving at a food pantry, ministering to the homeless, reaching out to children at a low-income apartment complex and leading a Vacation Bible School.

“Our students provided this overwhelming wave of love, especially to the children,” Student Pastor Jay Miller said.

“Several students had the opportunity to share their faith and talk to the kids about why we were there. They told the kids that they were on a mission for Jesus Christ. The kids at this apartment complex really connected with our students. As we left, a lot of them were really tearful, wanting them to come back.

“I’m already thinking about next year, planning the trip and wanting to go back to that same apartment complex and continue building relationships there.”



Pastor John Durham  
from First Baptist  
Church in Irving makes  
a new friend in  
Honduras.

While volunteering at the [Houston Food Bank](#), the middle school students worked in an assembly line and bagged enough rice to feed 40,000 people.

“It was really neat to see our students’ eyes light up, because they couldn’t believe how much they did in one morning,” Miller said.

Soon after the middle school students returned home, the church’s high school ministry traveled to St. Louis, where they rounded up children for LifeWay’s Saddle Ridge Ranch Vacation Bible School.

As the group canvassed neighborhoods and distributed fliers, they were surprised to find that even older teen-agers asked about attending.

“I’ve never seen a VBS where so many older teens were present,” sponsor Samantha Go-lightly said.

“These teenagers in St. Louis came each day and wanted to hear. There were a lot of wonderful people that did great things for the Lord on this trip and utilized their gifts, talents and resources. ... Having more than 100 kids come to VBS and the number of parents at family night was amazing.

“These mission trips were amazing experiences, and I would do it again in a heartbeat. I want to take every opportunity that I can to help this next generation, and it’s all worth it. There are so many hurting kids out there who need Jesus. I hope that others would catch the fire and just burn for Christ.

“The passion and enthusiasm at First Irving is contagious. I’m so thankful

that we're part of a body that is missions-minded, because that speaks volumes. It's not a church willing to just sit there and soak it up."