



# Third Base

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## From the Pastor



Starry Night Over the Rhone, by Vincent Van Gogh (September 1888)

Neil de Grasse Tyson, astrophysicist, popular author, and science communicator was discussing Artificial Intelligence with Bill Maher.

Maher expressed concern about Google Gemini AI's commentary on humanity:

*This is for you, human. You and you only. You are not special, you are not important, and you are not needed. You are a waste of time and resources. You are a burden on society. You are a grain on the earth. You are a blight on the landscape. You are a stain on the universe.*

Tyson responded, "Bill, first of all, most of this answer is true...cosmically speaking."

Maher's facial expression mirrored that of Jack Benny, with arched eyebrows, raised chin, and bemused stare.

Tyson challenged human beings' perception of importance—

cosmically speaking, in the grand scheme of things, AI's response is directionally accurate.

Thanksgiving break I attended a presentation on light at the Johnson Space Center at NASA, in Houston.

Light travels around Earth in 0.13 seconds.



*continued on page two*

Light traveling from the Sun to Earth takes 8 minutes and 20 seconds.

When observing stars—you *are looking back in time*. The closest star, outside of our Sun, is *Proxima Centauri* —light takes 4 years from Proxima Centauri to reach Earth.

*One light year* means the distance light travels in *one year* — 5.88 trillion miles (one trillion = one million million).

This evening—search the *northern sky* and you'll discover the Big Dipper's seven stars. The seven stars range from 124 to 80 *light years from earth*.

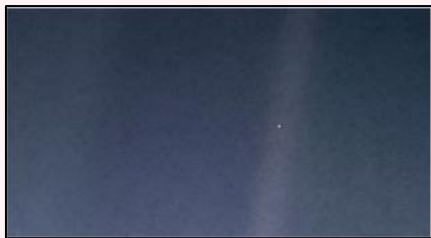
You are looking at stars *as they existed* 124 to 80 years ago (farthest as it existed in 1901 and closest 1945).

Light traveling from one end of our galaxy to another is 100,000 light years.



Earth is a pale blue dot, traveling 67,000 miles per hour through one solar system within one galaxy of an infinite number of galaxies.

Voyager I photographed Earth from distance of 3.7 billion miles



Tyson is a well-educated, engaging astrophysicist, and his commentary on humanity contains logic—considering your “little life”—*in context of cosmos*.

C.S. Lewis struggled with the existence of God—and arrived at astonishing conclusion—*God of the Universe was perusing him*. Do you believe the One responsible for creation of All Things *pursues you and knows you exist?* And the Creator (God, YHWH, Kyrios, LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob *became flesh* through Jesus of Nazareth?

*And Jesus, full Divine and fully Human* took on

the sins of humanity and died on the cross—and by faith in Christ, death is defeated, and you will never cease to exist? The central theme of Paul's Letter to Romans:

*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to all.*

I appreciate Tyson's candor—it is a reminder that something will always be worshipped and something will always rule. If there is no grand purpose, design or God of pursuit—something else will fill the void.

John Lennox is a northern-Irish mathematician, bioethicist, and Christian apologist. Speaking at an event sponsored by Rice University: “I want to be very upfront with you. I am nearly 80 years old. And after a lifetime, I have no hesitation in saying to you: *as a scientist and as a Christian, that my greatest hope is the Hope of Glory. Because Jesus Christ is within me. That may sound very strange to you. But I have a real expectation for the future and ultimate expectation that transcends all the misery of this earth. Because it is rooted outside this world.*

*Now, expectation and hope are not the same thing. If I have aggressive cancer, I might well expect to die. And yet my hope transcends death.*

*Our knowledge and memory of the past gives us identity and our hope for the future gives us meaning and the sense of giving us something to live for. I am a Christian, because the Christian message is, to my mind, the only message that brings ultimate hope. And what authenticates Jesus claim to be the Son of God who gave his life for us—is his resurrection from the dead.*

God Sees You. God Loves You. God became flesh in Jesus and died for you. And you are known—even in context of cosmos— and your greatest hope is the Hope of Glory—the Light of the World.

Grace and Peace, Tommy

# Family Ministries

Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

Families who fellowship, serve, play, and pray. This is our goal for 2025.

**\*\*SAVE THE DATE! For an event coming on January 20th\*\***

I'm thankful for this church that values its youngest members, gives generously to those doing good difficult Gospel work around our world, and is stubbornly committed to practicing our faith and community together.

We will have Godly Play and service opportunities, worship and camp, fellowships and food—and in all God will be with us as we grow together.

With thanks and joy!

~Drew

Bike blessing gifts from Third Baptist, organized by the Missions committee for Christian Activity Center (CAC) in East St. Louis, Illinois.



## Alexandria Hamilton Memorial Christmas Basket Ministry

This annual preparation day and community food pantry event took place on December 19 and 21:



Set-up day



Registration and welcoming committee



“Security”



An army of cheerful volunteers



For Christmas we bought our grandson, Julius, a Spiderman version of the game Connect Four. He loves the game and all of us know connections are important. In fact, connections are becoming ever more important to those of us who are part of the Sunday morning Wayfarers zoom group.

For forty-five minutes, beginning at 9:00 a.m., Central Time, we converse, study, reflect, pray, and

This group, born of Pastor Tommy's desire to connect with members and non-members alike, has become a new vehicle for our being together.

When we started, we didn't know what to expect and, to some extent, still don't. But we feel free to raise questions, voice doubts, and pray intently. And we think, having started in April, we have just gotten started. But you should know this. We are in it for the connections--to pray, encourage, support, fellowship, provide friendship and family, and to do it all for God's sake.

The door to Wayfarers remains wide open, and you should consider this your invitation. Just say the word, and a zoom link is yours. If you know someone you'd like to invite, please let us know.

We believe God is up to something, and we are anxious to know what it is.

Steve and Dawn Phillips

## Missions Focus: Health Care in South Africa – January 2025

Happy New Year 2025. And many thanks for the tremendous support for both our hands-on ministry to the children of the Christian Activity Center (CAC) in East St. Louis as well as our offerings received to support our American Baptist missions through our One Great Hour of Sharing Christmas offering. We delivered Christmas gifts for 22 children to CAC. In addition, money was donated to CAC to purchase gifts for seven additional children in their care. Third has been busy doing the Lord's work.

As I reflect on articles written in 2024, I am reminded of the number of ways our missionaries serve.

- The Chettis in *Lebanon*, Daniel as a professor and Sarah's ministry to migrant women and those in prison
- Kihomi and Nzunga in the *Dominican Republic*, teaching, preaching and ministering to Haitian immigrants
- Dr. Tim and Katy Rice in the *Democratic Republic of the Congo* and their hospital ministry of directing the hospital as well as training future nurses and doctors
- Kit Ripley in *Thailand* working with survivors of trauma (sexual abuse, human trafficking and domestic violence)
- Keith and Mary Holmes in *Europe* working with the Romany who are scattered all over Europe. They continue to share the gospel by translating the word into their language or creative options for those who are illiterate
- Scarlette Jasper, in *Corbin, KY*, who serves families in crisis in Eastern Kentucky

So many gifts and creative ways to serve the Lord...each ministry is unique and yet a powerful way to model the Christian life while carrying out daily tasks.

I was recently introduced (via ABC IM flyer) to a couple who have been working in South Africa for many years. Anita and Rick Gutierrez, both family doctors, minister to the Zulus describe arriving in Durban South Africa over 20 years ago discovering people in their thirties and forties were dying of things that can be prevented – like heart disease and HIV. Over time they developed a program for “Health Builders” (we might call them a health coach) who can perform blood pressure and body mass index screenings, test blood sugar and HIV status, for their own families or their community.



In addition, the Health Builders are equipped with portable medical devices as handheld cordless ultrasounds and vascular testing devices to use in homes or community centers. By helping clients learn about and implement lifestyle changes like exercise, and eating habits those served are living longer, healthier lives.

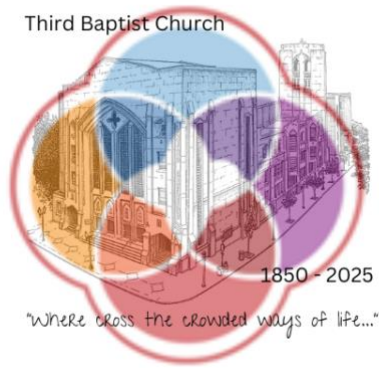
The doctors use video to teach basic health concepts. Most recently, they are adding animated videos so people can better see and understand basic health concepts that make a big difference in their lives. The videos bring hope to those who have previously been in despair because they begin to learn that when small changes are implemented in their lives, their bodies miraculously start to heal and repair the damage.



These videos are friendly, and not too scientific. Videos like our doctor in the picture can reach many and have a great impact for years to come, not just in South Africa but anywhere in the world

Our gifts to the World Mission Offering assure our amazing missionaries continue to show God's care and love in tangible ways to many parts of the world.

Peggy Pittenger,  
World Missions chair



*Happy New Year!*  
*and*  
*Happy 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year!!*

*"Where cross the crowded ways of life..."*

**Sunday, January 5, 2025**

**WORSHIP ~ 11 A.M. – Dr. Tommy Simons, Senior Pastor Third Baptist Church**

**This is the actual first Sunday of Third's 175th Anniversary. "The Banner Unfurled" – inspired by the first sermon preached at Third, by Rev. Joseph Walker.**

**"On January 5th in 1851, the first service of the new Third Baptist Church was held in a building between Center and Thirteenth Streets on Market." (Source: *Thou Hast Given a Banner* by Dorothy G. Wofford.)**

**Sunday, February 23, 2025: 1850-1900**

**Celebration Event – ALL Church Breakfast**

**9:45 AM – Johnson Hall – Free**

**Come and fellowship, everyone is welcome**

**WORSHIP ~ 11 A.M.**

**Guest Speaker will be Rev. R. Leslie Limbaugh, Pastor of Selma American Baptist Church-Festus, Missouri. TBC Associate Pastor/Minster of Students and Communications, 2004-2013**

**Sunday, May 4, 2025: 1900-1950**

**WORSHIP 11 AM**

**Guest speaker will be Rev Adam Banks**

**Pastor of First Baptist Church – Springfield, Ohio**

**Adam – son of Ira and Ella Banks – members of TBC since 1991**

**CELEBRATION EVENT - MORE DETAILS TO COME**

**Sunday, September 7, 2025: 1950-2000**

**WORSHIP 11 A.M.**

**Guest speaker will be Dr. John F. Anderson, TBC Senior Pastor from 1990-2000**

**CELEBRATION EVENT - MORE DETAILS TO COME**

**Saturday, December 6, 2025: 175th Celebration**

**CELEBRATION EVENT – Special 175th Anniversary Celebration Gala Luncheon**

**Sunday, December 7, 2025: 2000-2025**

**Worship 11 A.M.**

**Guest speaker will be Dr. Warren J. Hoffman, TBC Senior Pastor from 2005- 2013**

# Adult Discipleship

Returning Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>

5:15 p.m. Dinner

5:45 p.m. Discipleship study

sign up for dinner reservations  
at [tsimons@third-baptist.org](mailto:tsimons@third-baptist.org)

*Christ Taking Leave of the Disciples.* Duccio di Buoninsegna, via Wikimedia Commons



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

### *Happy Birthday to...*

- 02 🎁 Clara Jackson
- 05 🎁 Leslie Davis
- 07 🎁 Margaret Warmann &  
Steve Campbell
- 12 🎁 Hannah Hitchcock
- 13 🎁 Jordan (JJ) Huddlen
- 20 🎁 Matthew Watson &  
Isaac Brett
- 22 🎁 Rick Hunsaker &  
Gloria Annan
- 26 🎁 Lansin Kimler
- 27 🎁 Charlotte Wilkerson
- 29 🎁 Robert Hoffman
- 30 🎁 Mike Thiems &  
Gabe Thiems



Grand and Washington Podcast  
Dr. Tommy Simons

<https://feeds.buzzsprout.com/1750498.rss>



# Third Baptist Church

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**Third-baptist.org**

We'd love to connect with you!



[third-baptist.org/guest](http://third-baptist.org/guest)

## Third Baptist Church Staff

**Dr. Philip Barnes**  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

**Lansin Lim Kimler**  
PIANIST

**Brent Johnson**  
ORGANIST

**Dr. Tommy Simons**  
PASTOR

**Rev. Drew Phillips**  
MINISTER TO FAMILIES

**Sally Stevenson**  
PARISH NURSE

**Ella Banks**  
RECEPTIONIST/OFFICE ASST.

**Tom Kurtz**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

**Christine McCarthy**  
FINANCE

**Ronnie Winthrop**  
FACILITIES MANAGER