



Third Base

Vol 90, Issue 2 • February 2026



Omsk Prison Camp Siberia 19th century

From the Pastor

Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour (support in times of distress) of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule.

-Tolkien's Lord of the Rings

Fyodor Dostoevsky was 28 years old and stood before a firing squad for his involvement with idealistic, socialist leaning views of utopian thinkers. He was tied to a post blindfolded and heard “prepare for death” every second stretched to eternity.

A messenger arrived and said, “your execution was a ruse, you are sentenced to hard labor in Siberia.”

Dostoevsky lived 5 years among prisoners and guards capable of profound cruelty. His observations led to dramatic philosophical shift:

- Utopian ideals offer no solution to the problem of evil
- Human nature is capable of brutality, horrors, and degradation.

However, the most wicked of inmates can be redeemed—recalling a fellow prisoner:

He walked in silence through our six barrack-rooms. As he entered each room he prayed to the ikons, and then bowing low to his fellow prisoners he asked them not to remember evil against them.

Evil is real; but even the worst soul can be saved.

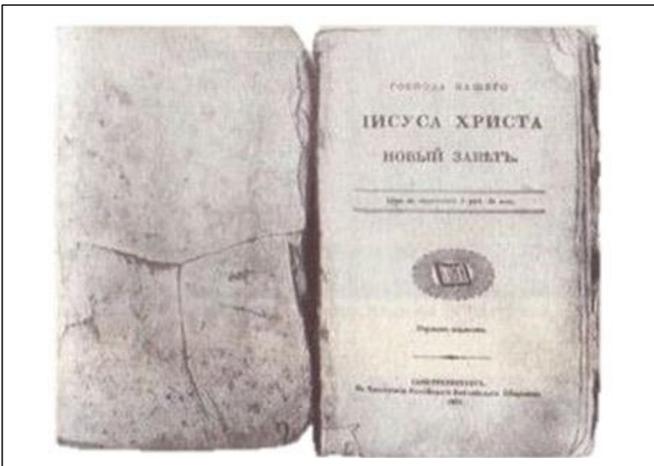
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Dostoevsky's characters in *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov* were shaped by his Siberian exile—personalities capable of unimaginable cruelty are never too far from the grace of God.

The lifeline for Dostoevsky's survival and sanity during exile was a gifted copy of the New Testament: "it kept hope alive in his heart" identifying with Christ's humility and endurance.

Dostoevsky *uprooted evil in the fields which he lived* by reading aloud to prisoners as a resource for spiritual nourishment and literacy.

Dostoevsky kept a copy of this New Testament (below) on his desk for rest of his life— sharpening his world view through lens of Christ's love and redemption.



Beloved, you are the hands and feet of the Gospel—remember each person written into your story is corrupted by sin and "even the worst soul" can be saved.

Life is a gift—redeem your time well, for only Jesus Christ contains words of life.

Blessings and love to all,
Tommy

FEBRUARY 2026 WORSHIP THEME & SERMON SERIES:

Connections:
How Popular Media Engages Us



The Fight Between Carnival and Lent (Dutch: De strijd tussen Vasten en Vastenavond) is an oil-on-panel painting, by the Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder, in 1559. It is a panorama of contemporary life in the Southern Netherlands. While the painting contains nearly 200 characters, it is unified under the theme of the transition from Shrove Tuesday to Lent, the period forty days before Easter

Family Ministries

Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

February 2026:

Families, our 1st through 5th graders are invited to join Drew every other Sunday during worship for Godly Play in the children's area. We participate in Bible stories and play a game after. We'll meet February 8 and 22 this month.

Lakisha Johnson teaches our elementary Sunday School class. They conclude each month a movie about the stories they've been studying.



We are blessed to have monthly music labs with Stephen Schermitzler—we learn some theory, play some instruments, and gain appreciation and knowledge each time we meet.

We continue to have lively Wednesday youth groups at 5:45 on Wednesdays and during the Sunday School hour.

Get ready for surprise activities and practices as we approach the Lenten season....

Drew

Alexandria Hamilton Memorial Christmas Baskets Event December 2025



Volunteers for monthly food pantry events, or monetary donations, are always welcome! A steady group of regulars and a growing number of newer visitors come to shop on the third Saturday of each month. Connect with Monica McDaniel-Collins or Drew Philips for more information.

Mission Focus: February 2026

Over the centuries women have been the foundation and glue that holds their families together. Yet at the same time women have endured abuse, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. Many of the missionaries we help support actively work with women who have experienced these traumas. I think of Sara Chetti in Beirut, Lebanon whose ministry has been to imprisoned maids, who have been discarded by their “owners” who have also taken away any ID’s, so they are unable to return to their home country. Jana Lee, in Cyprus works with women fleeing the abuse and terror they have lived through in the middle east. So many refugees travel through Cyprus on their way to Greece or Europe seeking a better life. Many other Baptist missionaries are working around the world with individuals traumatized by abusive situations, who live with the desperation and shame of their past.

The New Life Center (NLC) is a partner of American Baptists in Northern Thailand, located, in Chiang Mai (meaning “New City”). This city is the second largest in Thailand, Bangkok being the largest. While a city of great beauty and cultural significance it also holds dark secrets. Over many years women from Chiang Mai and the wider region that includes Chiang Rai Province, as well as parts of neighboring Myanmar have been exploited and trafficked to southern Thailand.



This image shows the amazing cultural beauty of these women in Northern Thailand.

The NLC works tirelessly to support and care for trafficked women, as well educating local families, young women *and* men in the wider region of the dangers associated with empty promises made by traffickers.

This month, Third Baptist will be hosting Rev. Kit Ripley. Kit serves with the NLC Administrative Team. She provides rehabilitative care for survivors of trauma, including sexual abuse, human trafficking and domestic violence through clinical mental health counseling and art therapy. Kit holds a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary and was ordained in 2002. In 2023 she received a Master’s of Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a specialization in Art Therapy.

Watch for more information about her visit scheduled for February 22nd.

Read more first-hand stories of women who have benefitted from NLC’s care, [here](https://issuu.com/kit.ripley/docs/new_life_center_foundation_annual_report_2024?r=xKAE9_zU1NQ):
https://issuu.com/kit.ripley/docs/new_life_center_foundation_annual_report_2024?r=xKAE9_zU1NQ

TBC Missions Chair, Peggy Pittenger.
Peggy Pittenger

Third continues to be blessed with children and babies!

If you are interested in helping with extended care during worship-
-on a seasonal rotation with other volunteers-
please contact Ella Banks.

(background check required)



HOW LONG WILL THE LIGHTS STAY ON?

Each year I engage in a little informal exercise. I try to determine when the last Christmas lights go off.

Of course, all the exterior lights and Christmas tree lights shine brightly on Christmas. Otherwise, what's the point?

After Christmas, though, whether the lights remain on becomes a kind of guessing game. I caught my across-the-street neighbor, stripping the ribbons off her mailbox two days after Christmas.

It's not unusual for lights to remain on through January 1, which is a bookend on the official holiday season.

But it gets really dicey after that. Brave souls on Kessler Boulevard show their holiday spirit as late as January 16, by which time it all begins to seem a bit weird. And that's where this story ends.

Except to say that the better question is this: How long will your and my spiritual lights remain lit after our most recent Christmas?

Which is another way to talk about "this little light of mine," I guess.

Let's remember Jesus all year.

Steve and Dawn

Adult Discipleship

Dinner and Discipleship
February 4, 11, 25

5:15 p.m. Dinner

5:45 p.m. Discipleship discussion:
Philippians: Pursue Meaning

Sign up for dinner reservations
with Pastor Tommy:
tsimons@third-baptist.org



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to...

- 04 🎁 Michelle Campbell
06 🎁 Delilah Canning &
Maria Gray
09 🎁 Melinda Jackson
10 🎁 LaVerne Graham
11 🎁 Beverly Odell
12 🎁 Kaelyn Smithers
13 🎁 Linda Ramey
19 🎁 Alex Brooks
20 🎁 Gene Dobbs Brandford
21 🎁 Rick Lay &
Mike Niederer
22 🎁 Edward Sharpe



Listen in to Third's Podcasts:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1750498>

You are invited to journey three paths:

- *Justice and Mercy* - with Jerry Bryan – weekly on Sundays
- *Good Day!* - with the Pastor
- *At the Movies* – with Ashleigh and Aaron



Third Baptist Church

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We'd love to connect with you!



third-baptist.org/guest

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FACILITIES MANAGER