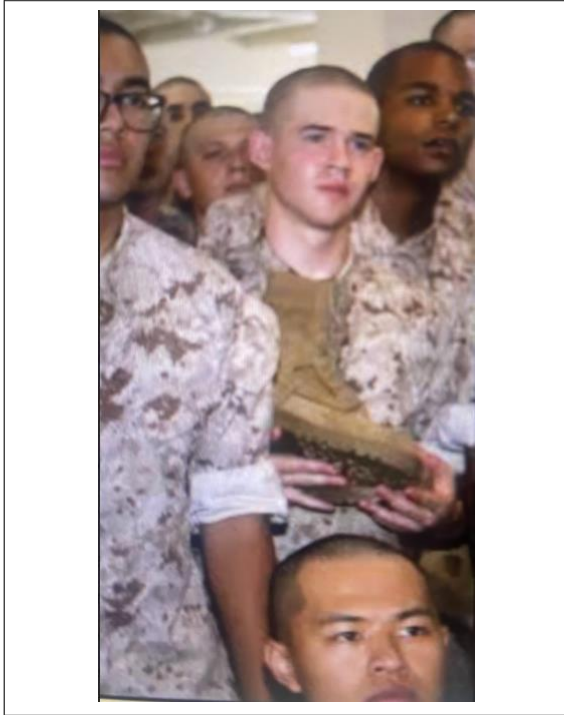




Third Base

Vol 90, Issue 8 • August 2026

From the Pastor



The first night of boot camp recruits are ordered off bus and told to stand on set of painted yellow footprints.

From there, prospective Marines moves through hatched doors into receiving building—symbolic of the point of no return—civilian life ends and transformation begins—training through first week of October.

You are allowed final phone call to parents, repeating script while drill sergeant shouts in your ear—and thus begins 48 hours of no sleep—Colton called his first night away, July 13, 1 a.m. and sounded calm as sargeant's voice echoed in background.

The only communication allowed is small window of time—for recruits to write letters on Sunday afternoon.

I've written around six since his departure and attempt to keep things as light as possible before tossing in curveball of faith and encouragement.

The rest of your time is enjoying another round of *Where's Waldo?* You search Fox Company, Second battalion, Platoon 2135 Facebook page and enlarge images and search for loved one.

I finally caught a glimpse of Colton (image above). I took a pic with phone, enlarged, copied and placed on mantle in my office along with a small Marine Fox Company flag.

Reviewing photo, I felt as if I'd been ordered off a bus and directed to stand on yellow footprints—knowing nothing will ever be the same.

It seems we all find ourselves in the same place—a complete reliance on Providence of God and encouragement by the saints.

Third shines like stars in this area of relationship health. It seems an email, text or phone call arrives at just the right moment, at just the right time.

continued on next page

Paul's letters contain golden threads of encouragement—Paul to churches—Saints to Paul—encouragement received by Philippian church energized Paul to craft letter of joy, while under house arrest.

Why?

Paul wrote and preached what he needed—recognizing encouragement from Titus to Epaphroditus—course corrected back onto narrow road of hope.

Beloved, review your relationship connections while your spiritually antenna is raised—has a name come to mind? Well, put pen to paper and let your gift of grace arrive to one whom Spirit has placed on your heart.

Well, its late and I'm headed to bed, but first, a quick game of Where's Waldo?

Blessings and love to all,

Tommy

**Join us for a Special Luncheon!
Sunday, August 23rd ~
following morning worship**

**Welcoming Kevin Chunko,
and recognizing Gabe Thiems as Summer
Pastoral Intern and Tim Ahern as new
Facility Manager**

A meal will be provided by friends of Lois and Ric Hunsaker, generously sponsoring the luncheon.

Steve Schermitzler and Isobel Ramsey will provide musical entertainment, and a congregational blessing will be given to Kevin as he begins his ministry with Third Baptist.

Sending Notes of Care:

Colton Simons can receive letters while at bootcamp, to this address:

Colton Simons
2nd RTBN Fox Co PLT 2135
36001 Midway Ave
San Diego, CA 92140-5530



Third's once-a-month Saturday Food Pantry serves a great – and growing - need in our community.

Contribute food, cash, or your time in volunteer hours, for the worthy cause! (Teens can count this towards community service...)

Item donations are great and will be gratefully received and distributed, including packaged food, fresh produce, drinks, or hygiene items. Of particular assistance: hearty soups, and sauce with meat (such as Chef Boyardee) - cans or factory-sealed packets.

Please connect with Pastor Drew or Monica McDaniel-Collins about where to drop off donations.



Family Ministries

Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

You've likely seen these photos (next page) of wonderful groups of campers at Lake Springfield Baptist Camp from the past two weeks.

I've been taking students from Third to LSBC for six years and continue to be impressed by the connections made, relationships formed, and the bonds that happen through the worship and play that takes place there.

Third's students model welcome and leadership. These are traits they come by honestly because you, Church, have had a hand in raising them. Be proud of these students! They represent us well.

I'm so thankful to Mawufemor Amuzu, Cietta Gross, Monica McDaniel Collins, and Mike Thiems who counseled at Senior High Camp (Monica doubled as camp nurse!) for the gracious leadership and selfless care they modeled. Gabe Thiems and Autumn Hildebrand were outstanding Junior Counselors for our students at Junior High Camp.

Natalie Thiems directed both weeks with wise and loving leadership. Her gifts extend far beyond "bi-state camp hype woman" and we are so blessed by her love for all students.

Naomi Thiems served as Ministry Intern at LSBC for the entire summer and getting to hear her testimony at Vespers both weeks remains one of my favorite memories. Naomi's leadership and presence only enhanced our weeks.

Put September 13th on your calendar, when you'll hear from our campers and all of our students as we share about our summer and lead worship, as well as promote those heading to youth group and the children's department.

I am so thankful I get to serve and work with our church family. Thanks for being generous with our students—there is no limit to the value of this investment.

Peace,
Drew

Parents of Pre-K through Fifth graders:

Put Sunday August 16th on you calendar: from 1-3 p.m. after worship we will have our quarterly VBS. Stories of Jesus, music, games, crafts, and food!

Families, join us for lunch after worship and leave your students for VBS.

RSVP with Drew: dphillips@third-baptist.org



Mission Focus August 2026: Gateway180

The Christian Service Center (CSC) was founded in 1971 as an emergency shelter for vulnerable individuals and families. Some in our congregation recall that a woman from Third Baptist was instrumental in its founding.

The location, 1000 19th St. Louis has been in constant use since those early days. The founding principal: Provide food, a bed, and shelter to homeless individuals and families.



Over the years the emphasis moved beyond just sheltering and the mission has expanded. In 2011, the name was changed to Gateway Homeless Services, and later to Gateway180 – along with the tagline Homelessness Reversed. In addition to basic support, the goal is to provide personalized help to address the root cause of the situation and turn the circumstances around (180 degrees) thus ending the cycle of homelessness. Today's services include:

- Personalized Case Management
- Counseling (Behavioral and Mental health)
- Employment Programs
- Occupational Therapy
- Housing Programs (Transitional to Permanent housing)
- Connection with community resources

While at Gateway180 the team works with residents to teach skills such as financial literacy, household management, consistent employment, and more.

Currently Gateway180 is the largest homeless shelter in Missouri and recognized for its programs to reverse homelessness. One hallmark is keeping families together – single moms with children as well as single dads with children. Recent statistics include:

- 181 individuals moved into permanent housing in 2025
- Tornado victims continue to be a large percentage of individuals housed
- The total number of beds have increased from 110 to 122
- Gateway180 averages 500 individuals helped per year
- Additional women are accepted on nights when temperatures are <25degrees

One of the earliest projects at the shelter was called: Operation Brown Bag. The plan was to use the bagged meals in-house as well as for homeless on the street. For many years, Third Baptist's Women's Missionary Society prepared lunch bags. Third's Missions Team has continued that practice by providing the supplies for the meals each month.

You can find more about Gateway180 at www.gateway180.org, on Facebook, YouTube or Instagram. A list of "needs" is listed on Facebook periodically to provide supplies for those entering the facility as well as the client(s) moving to permanent housing. There are many opportunities to volunteer at Gateway. See Peggy Pittenger or Pastor Drew for more information.

For those experiencing this season in their lives...

Grief - A Poem by Candace Thomas

*Grief appears in different ways;
It creates a gloomy haze
That feels it will last all of our days.*

*Losing anyone is hard—
Like an enormous glass shard
Piercing the heart with disregard.*

*Most who lost loves have felt this pain—
And b'lieve the sorrow will not wane,
But they should hope to find Love again.*

*Release the grief; don't keep it inside.
For There are many who too have cried.
God will lead them to you with their arms stretched
wide.*

*Always remember when you feel despondent,
That God is still there as the Only constant,*



CHANGE, CHANGE, EVERYWHERE THERE'S CHANGE

The fact is that the Five Man Electrical Band sang the song with those lyrics in 1971 - and not much has changed since.

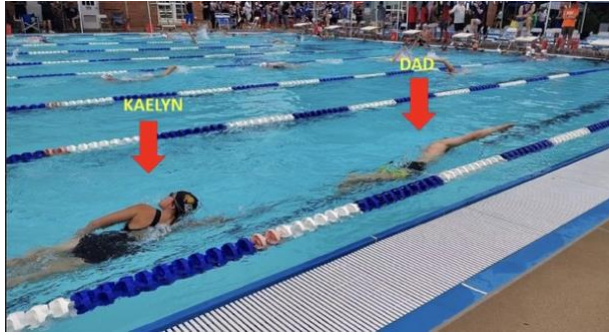
As a consequence, in Wayfarers we have begun a six-session study of "Living with Change."

The texts we are considering are these:

- Genesis 11:1-9, the tower of Babel
- Nehemiah 2:1-17, the rebuilding of the Jerusalem walls
- Lamentations 3:1-26, God's love in a deserted city
- Acts 2:1-13, Pentecost
- Acts 15:1-29, the Jerusalem council
- Revelation 21:1-14, the new heaven and new earth

We hope to get a new sense of how God meets us in changing times. Know that we would love to have you join us. Email us at [<drstevedawn50@att.net>](mailto:drstevedawn50@att.net) for a link.

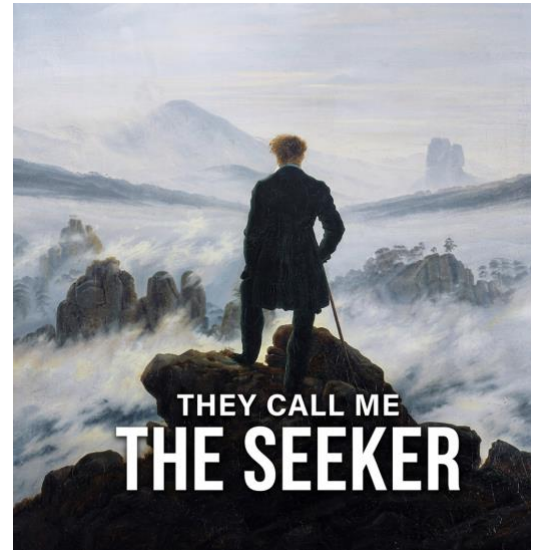
Steve and Dawn



Todd Smithers swam in an elite High School level meet with Kaelyn, for Father's Day this past June. Clayton Smithers also swam in a younger age bracket.

Todd swam as the only parent out of 1,000 swimmers in the meet as a Father-Daughter duo.

Go, Smithers family!



Third Baptist Podcast featuring conversations with similar and competing world views, episodes available now at [this link](#).

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to...

- 02 🎁 Natalie Thiems
- 04 🎁 Kayia Mooney
- 05 🎁 Ken Blanton
- 06 🎁 Scarlett Brand
- 10 🎁 Rachael Whitt-Barnes
- 13 🎁 Jerry Campbell &
Julie McDaniel
- 20 🎁 Evelyn Kurtz
- 25 🎁 Avery Brooks
- 27 🎁 Frank Stevens &
Pat Blake &
Josiah Huddlen
- 28 🎁 David Stevenson
- 30 🎁 Jill Arbin



Listen in to Third's other Podcasts:

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

The Lively Table:

- *Justice and Mercy* - with Jerry Bryan, weekly on Sundays
- *At the Movies* – with Ashleigh and Aaron



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Third-baptist.org

We'd love to connect with you!



third-baptist.org/guest

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