



Third Base

Vol 90, Issue 1 · January 2026

From the Pastor



The fish (Greek: ἰχθύς, ichthys) became an enduring symbol in early Christianity—birthed during period of persecution.

The symbol arose from an acrostic:

- Ἰησοῦς (Iēsous) – Jesus
- Χριστός (Christos) – Christ
- Θεοῦ (Theou) – of God
- Υἱός (Huios) – Son
- Σωτήρ (Sōtēr) – Savior

→ ἸΧΘΥΣ = “fish”

(notice 5 Greek letters in above image, middle section, bottom row)

The 175th Anniversary Art Project, designed by Sydney Sanker includes visual images of spiritual pilgrimage from Third members painted on ceramic hexagons creating outline of fish.

Avery Brooks photographed angels in *Bellefontaine Cemetery*, established in 1849, one year before Third’s birth in 1850.

The angels bookend Sydney’s creation:

- The left angel signifies hope in Christ, shadowed by the cross with right hand raised in joyous anticipation.
- The right angel, with face downcast, weeping, with both hands covering head in sorrow— reveals pain of mortality, death and separation.

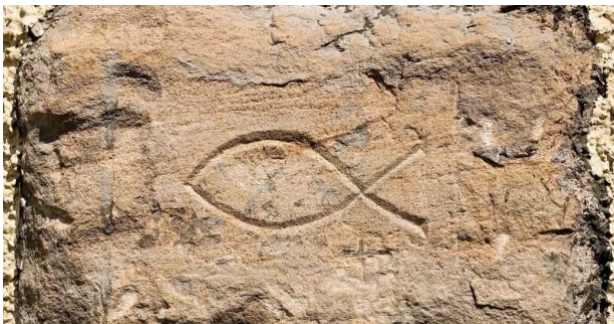
continued on next page

Seven generations have traveled dramas of death, separation, and pain as members of Third Baptist Church.

And all are called to finish well, with stubborn faith, placing our story in blessed hope of Jesus Christ.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
(2 Timothy 4:7)

Imagine you're approached on a dusty Roman road in the second century, during period of persecution. The person kneels in front of you and draws elongated U in the sand—you complete image with an upside U— (following was placed on plaster in Roman catacombs)



The fish carried a bold message—a creed of defiance against the empire and spirit of the age.

JESUS	CHRIST	GOD'S	SON	SAVIOR
Iesous	Christos	Theou	Huios	Soter

This is the hope and message of Third Baptist Church, entering year 176—with relationship dynamic echoed by wisdom of the Apostle John:

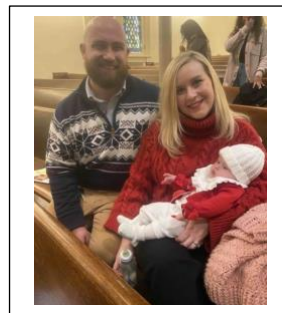
Love one another, because love is from God; everyone who lives is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us, so much, we also ought to love one another... There is no fear in love...

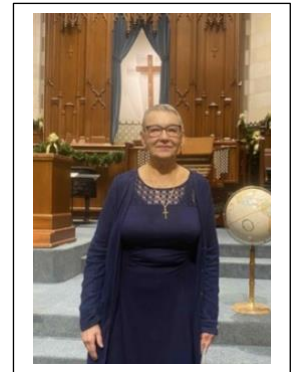
Beloved, let us boldly travel together and finish well...

And to that end, Third closes out our 175th year welcoming Zachary, Layken, and Scarlett (4 months old) Brand, as well as Diane Jacoby to our beloved community.

Grace and Peace, Tommy



Welcome new members!



JANUARY 2026 WORSHIP
CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

The Vision of Saint Augustine by Benvenuto Tusi (1520) depicts Augustine sitting in a garden in Milan, tormented by inner struggle and loss of direction, hearing a child's voice sing over and over "Take up and Read"—he opens his Bible at random—and falls to Romans 13:13-14.



Family Ministries

Drew Phillips, Minister to Families

TBC sponsored 23 children from the Christian Activity Center (CAC) in East St. Louis this Christmas season!

Church members shopped in October-November, then gathered to have a “wrap session” for gifts to the children.



Lighting advent candles and blessing Third's youngest new member, Scarlett Brand

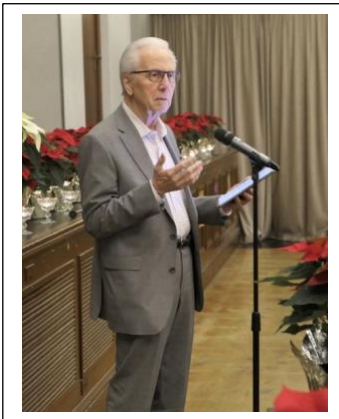
December 14th special Carol Service – with the Perseid Quartet and the Handbell Choir



On Advent Sunday, British composer, Sasha Johnson Manning, the Perseid String Quartet with Chantal Incandela, and Lansin Lim Kimler, together presented a new concerto for piano and strings that embellish three of the hymns central to Third's message: that most Baptist of hymns, "Shall We Gather At The River," the chorale that reminds us of Third's physical and spiritual location, "Where Cross The Crowded Ways Of Life," and culminating with our unofficial mantra, "Amazing Grace."



175th Anniversary Luncheon, Saturday, December 6th



Mission Focus December: Looking Back at 2025 Endeavors

2025 was a full year for missions at Third Baptist Church. Most notably, we enjoyed visits from several missionaries. Meeting missionaries face to face and hearing their stories blesses our congregation in many ways. This summer, Vera Ramsey introduced us to her friend, Whitney Morreau Zulu. Born in Paducah, Ky she has visited and worked in Zambia dedicating her life to serving by working with community schools to improve their standard of education. Learn more about her work here: <https://www.impactonezambia.org/>

Dr. Tim and Kathy Rice visited us in March sharing information about their work in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Several of our congregation provided baby caps and receiving blankets for their newborns. The needs are great in Congo. Please pray for strength and wisdom as the Rice's navigate incredible challenges managing the hospital as well as training future doctors and nurses.

A new mom receives a baby layette from
Third Baptist Church.

Read more about their ministry at:

<https://internationalministries.org/author/kt-rice/>

Jana Lee is new to us at Third. A few of us met Jana during the CBF Convention in June. Jana ministers in Cyprus to many of the immigrants fleeing the war-torn middle East. Read more about Jana at: <https://www.classy.org/campaign/jana-lee-2/c571115>

Dr. Dan and Sarah Chetti visited in November bringing updates about their ministry in Beirut, Lebanon and the greater Middle East. Stories coming from the Middle East remind us that our God's spirit is on the move in that part of the world.

November's focus on missions through our 175 years highlighted connections from 1894 when Said Jreidini was baptized at Third Baptist and subsequently returned to Beirut to found the First Baptist Church in the Middle East. His work continues to grow and thrive today. Other connections are discovered from the late 1950's when a Third member, Gloria Pierce Marshall and her husband travel to the Belgium Congo (later Democratic Republic of Congo) as missionaries. Today the Rice's minister in Congo.

Our final project of the year was providing Christmas to 23 children who are part of the Christian Activity Center of East St. Louis. Many of our congregation participated either by donating, playing Santa and shopping or wrapping and delivering gifts.

Please note that through 2025, our budgeted mission funds were used primarily to send support for our missionaries. During the month of December, any remaining funds will be sent to the missionaries we support as a Christmas gift.]

Our Mission offerings were used to support several important projects and ministries that included: Olive Branch ministries (Scarlette Jasper), Enduring Love (Chettis), Hurricane Helene relief (CBF), Ukrainian Refugee relief (ABCIM), Fistula Campaign (Rice's), Gateway180 (Fire restoration), and Jamaica hurricane relief (CBF).

Our Easter Offering and Christmas (2024) offering together raised \$13,372 which goes directly to assure all missionaries are supported financially and may remain on the mission field.

Thank you, Third Baptist, for an amazing year of missions.
Peggy Pittenger, TBC Missions Chair



THE JESUS OF ADVENT

One of our favorite poets and priests is an Irishman named Padraig o' Tuama.

One of his reflections has made it into my (Steve's) morning devotional time. In part, it goes like this:

So every morning, I kneel, waiting, making friends with the habit of listening, hoping that I'm being listened to. There, I greet God and my own disorder. I say hello to chaos, my unmade decisions, my unmade bed, my desire, and my trouble. I say hello to distraction and privilege, I greet the day, and I greet my beloved and bewildering Jesus.

What better thought as we complete the days of Advent and Christmas.

We do not own Jesus. He is not our possession. We are His.

And regarding that, I would just say I believe He remains beloved and bewildering.

Steve and Dawn

From the Director of Music – Dr. Philip Barnes

I wanted to share with you the message I received from composer David Bednall in England. You will recall that TBC commissioned him to write a new piece in honor of Brent's 20 years at the church, and Sunday, November 30th, we sang *With A Voice of Singing* to enrich the worship, and we partnered it with two of David's earlier works - the *Venite* ("O Come, Let Us Sing") and the piano *Lullaby* he wrote for his goddaughter.

I hope you will be cheered by his reaction. He is not only a fine composer, but also a much accomplished church musician, having studied at The Queen's College, Oxford, and then served on the music staff at Wells and Bristol Cathedrals. He is now director of music at Clifton Cathedral, and the University Organist in Bristol. [I shall point out to him where Brent used the tibia organ stop, never fear!]

Dear Philip,

Thank you so much for this and for the three beautiful and stunning performances of my works. What fabulously spirited singing from the choir - superb and just what I would have hoped for. I'm trying to spot the tibia... can you give me a hint?!

Beautifully played on both piano and organ as well so please do extend my thanks to the choir. It is an honour to have a premiere given, but in some ways an extra special thrill to hear older pieces performed as well - thank you so much.

So many thanks again and such a joy to hear you all.

David

Adult Discipleship

Dinner and Discipleship returns
Wednesday, January 7th

5:15 p.m. Dinner discussion and spiritual application
facilitated by Rob Lamb:

The continued study of The Gospel of John

5:45 p.m. Adult and Youth discipleship led by Rev. Drew
Phillips, Children directed by Portia Nartay

Sign up for dinner reservations with Tommy:

tsimons@third-baptist.org



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 Lim Kimler
- 27 🎁 Charlotte Wilkerson
- 29 🎁 Robert Hoffman
- 30 🎁 Mike Thiems &
Gabe Thiems



Listen in to Third's Podcasts:

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

You are invited to journey three paths:

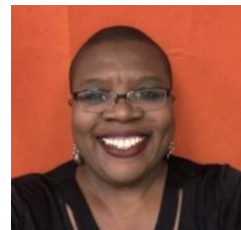
- *Good Day!* - with the Pastor
- *Justice and Mercy* - with Jerry Bryan
- *At the Movies* – with Ashleigh
and Aaron

Mark Your Calendar!

Sunday, January 14th



Food Pantry Ministry and
Volunteers are recognized
in Morning Worship



Special Guest
Preacher:
Karen Fulks of
Take Two
Productions



Third Baptist Church

620 North Grand Blvd

St. Louis, MO 63103

Office: 314-533-7340

Third-baptist.org

We'd love to connect with you!



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